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**Special Topic: Place Exploration**

*How the Liberty Market is experienced,  
understood, and visualised*

Third Year Special Topic Research Project

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*“The heart and soul of the Liberties” (Respondent I 2017)*

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## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	1
1.1 Setting the scene	2
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Place	7
2.2.1 Third Place	8
2.3 Community	10
2.4 The Marketplace	13
2.5 Changing Consumer Patterns	16
2.6 Conclusion	17
<b>Chapter 3: Research Methods</b>	18
3.1 Statement of Research Question	18
3.2 The Qualitative Approach	18
3.2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research	20
3.2.2 Reflexivity	21
3.3 Ethics	21
3.4 Sources of data	23

3.4.1 The case study approach	23
3.4.2 Interviewing	24
3.4.3 Visual Images	25
3.5 Analysis of data	26
3.6 Conclusion	27
<b>Chapter 4: Discussion of Findings</b>	<b>28</b>
4.1 Introduction	28
4.2 Place	29
4.2.1 Third Place	30
4.3 Community	33
4.3.1 Social Connections	33
4.3.2 Boundaries	39
4.4 The Marketplace	39
4.4.1 Presentation of stalls	43
4.5 Changing consumer patterns	45
4.6 Conclusion of findings	49
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusion</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>59</b>
Appendix A: Consent Form	60
Appendix B: Transcript of Interview	60

## **Abstract**

*This study explores the public marketplace in contemporary society. The research examines how beyond the buying and selling of goods, the marketplace has potential to act as a public place, catering for a variety of forms of sociality. This study is on Dublin's Liberty Market in Meath Street. A qualitative research methods approach was taken to collect data comprising of semi-structured interviews with visual images used as illustration alongside the analysis. Public retail markets have been on the decline in recent years as a result of modern processes which has led to a shift in consumption patterns and an increase in gentrification and urban renewal. This study explores how the Liberty Market is experienced, understood, and visualised in contemporary society. The research found that the Liberty Market can be identified as a third place in modern society, providing a place which embraces a social community, allowing for social interactions and personal relations among both traders and their clientele. The significance of this research highlights the importance of the nature of third place and community in this isolated contemporary society and how Dublin's Liberty Market caters for such a place.*

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Jon Goss argued in his study on the shopping mall that our “real desire”, he proposes, is “for community and social space free from the instrumental calculus of design” (Goss 1993:43 in Watson 2008:1590). Markets have the potential to offer such a space through their “haphazardness, serendipity, physical openness and a typically long local association with a local community and place” (Watson 2008:1590). This study explores the marketplace in contemporary society in relation to how it functions as a social place.

This research set out to examine how Dublin’s Liberty Market is experienced, understood and visualised by both its stall holders and clientele. Further sub-questions in this study set out to examine if there is a sense of community in the market, do traders know their customers and do both traders and customers feel a sense of attachment to the Liberty Market. Qualitative methods was the form of research used including a series of semi-structured interviews with visual images used as illustration alongside the analysis. The key themes explored in this study include place, community, the marketplace and changing consumer patterns. The theme of place exploration formed the basis of the literature for this study.

Although this research acknowledges the primary function of the marketplace as a place for the buying and selling of goods, this study goes further into the aspects of sociality that exist within the Liberty Market. This highlights the significance of my research project to the study of Sociology as it explores the importance of the marketplace as a social place, catering for endless amounts of social interactions and encounters, creating a sense of community and forming identities, meanings and attachments.

Following Simmel’s arguments in 1903/1948 on how modern society has resulted in “increasing impersonality” and “rationality in social relations”, the marketplace has the potential to enable a “more engaged urban subject to emerge in these spaces” (Simmel

1903/1948 in Watson, 2009: 1590). This study on the Liberty Market demonstrates how this urban engagement is produced through the relationships, bonds and trusts between the market traders and their customers. The research revealed how the Liberty Market represents a site for social inclusion, association and relations among both stall holders and their clientele. This study also revealed counter points to arguments made by theorists such as Robert Putnam who discusses the decline of community in “Bowling Alone” (2000), as findings revealed a the Liberty Market formed a sense of community.

Incorporated into this chapter is the sub-chapter Setting the scene, this provides a general overview of the Liberty Market and the surrounding area of Meath Street. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature which formed the foundation of this study providing an overview of a variety of theories, articles, and books that have been written in relation to the themes of place, community, the marketplace, and changing consumer patters. Chapter Three then provides an overview of the research methods used in this study. Chapter Four provides an in-depth analysis of the findings. The final chapter then is the Conclusion which provides an overview of the whole study.

### **1.1 Setting the scene**

Dublin’s famous Liberty Market in Meath Street was established in 1973 and is one of the longest running markets in Dublin city. “Situated in the Liberties with great heritage, and an amazing atmosphere, a place not to be missed” (libertymarket.ie 2015).

Meath Street comes to life at the weekends when the lively street market opens. The market celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013 and since the first day it opened it has continuously offered great bargains and great service to the public. The market opens to the public on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The Liberty Market contains a wide variety of stalls and

traders, it offers “the best bargains around on everything shoppers are looking for from clothing and jewellery to toys and garden supplies” (visitdublin.com).



**Image 1. “The centre of the universe” (Respondent I 2017)**

The history of Meath Street goes as far back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to the Earls of Meath who were generations of families that dominated the area of Meath Street for nearly 300 hundred years establishing Victorian Housing for the working class and also giving Meath Street its name (LibertiesDublin 2017). Meath Street was the first industrial suburb in Dublin with work such as brewing, distilling and weaving for agricultural produce. Brewing and distilling families dominated the Liberties during the 19<sup>th</sup> century particularly the Guinness family who developed the world’s largest brewery. The 19<sup>th</sup> century however also consisted of poverty and poor living conditions in which the area had poor slums. Although the area continued to

decline during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Meath Street and Thomas Street has remained the heart of Auld Dublin (LibertiesDublin 2017).

One of the longest lasting markets in Dublin, the Liberty Market is what drives Meath Street. It is one of the main attractions to the area. The variety of stalls in the market range from traders who have worked there over 40 years, selling products such as clothes and handbags to relatively new traders, selling new and creative products as well as technological devices. There is a great diversity of choice for all customers. One of the principle attractions to the Liberty Market is its exceptional number of bargains.

It is evident, from visiting the Liberty Market that there is always a great atmosphere. No matter what day or what time of the year you walk through the market you are guaranteed to have some fun.



**Image 2. “Everything under one roof”**

The Liberty Market is located in the heart of the Meath Street community. Surrounded by butchers, hair dressers, grocery shops, even a café and the local church. When you walk into

the market it is like stepping back in time. Since it opened back in 1973, the overall lay out and structure of the market has barely changed. The main entrance can be seen in Image 1, there is also a side entrance onto the side of Meath Street. When you walk through the market, you immediately notice the differences among the traders, in relation to the lay out of their stalls, the products they sell and even their methods of selling.

Even though Meath Street itself is changing, mainly as a result of gentrification in the area, the people in the area are not. I wanted to do my research project on the Liberty Market because I am familiar with the area as my family grew up there, but I also chose this market because of the people in the community who are always so warm and welcoming. It is without a doubt “the real Dublin” (Irish Times, 2014).

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This research is based on the topic of place exploration and explores the public marketplace in contemporary society, solely examining how Dublin's Liberty Market is experienced, understood and visualised. The aim of this literature review is to provide a general overview and understanding of the variety of material and literature that has been written on this topic. This review will also establish the significant themes which form the foundation for this research. The themes that emerged in this study include; Place, Community, The Marketplace, and Changing consumer patterns.

Each theme provides an in-depth insight into the purpose of this study and its contribution to the study of Sociology. Significant literature which this review focuses on in relation to the theme of place is the notion of third place and place attachment. The theme of community is analysed to establish the areas which this study will focus on including the significance of social interactions and boundaries within community and the narrative of the eclipse of community in contemporary society. The marketplace is an essential theme for this research and this review explores the variety of literature and studies on the marketplace, focusing on the sociality and the decline of the marketplace in contemporary society. Lastly, the theme of changing consumer patterns provides an insight into the development of consumer society and how it has transformed throughout the years. The significance of this theme to this study is that it highlights the impacts of changing consumption patterns on the marketplace.

Each theme explored in this literature review can all be linked with one another, highlighting the essential topics in this study that provide the foundation for both the research and the analysis of the findings.

## 2.2 Place

“A place is remarkable, and what makes it so is an unwindable spiral of material form and interpretive understandings or experiences” (Gieryn 2000:471). The concept of place in Sociology is hard to define but Thomas F. Gieryn simplifies the term into three different perspectives. Place can be observed as a geographical location, considered for its material form and place can also be invested with attachment, meaning and value (Gieryn 2000:464-465). John Agnew argues that place is “a discrete if elastic area in which settings for the constitution of social relations are located and with which people can identify” (Agnew 1992: 263 in Corcoran 2002:207). Although it is evident that the concept of place is a tricky term to define, there is a vast variety of literature available which can contribute to our knowledge of place.

Mary P. Corcoran’s European case study on place attachment contributes to our understanding of the significance of the concept of place and place attachment in Sociology. “Embedded within the concept of place are layers of sedimented meaning derived from memory, sentiment, tradition and identification with a spatial location” (Mary P. Corcoran 2002: 203). Simonsen argues that the crucial elements to place attachment involve “associational life” that is in terms of social interactions and communications, personal relations and recognised practices at the local level (1997:172). Corcoran argues that at the root of place attachment are our own individual responses to places and the relations they carry in “in terms of memories and fantasies” (2002:205).

Place attachment enables a sense of security and well-being, identifies group boundaries and stabilizes memories (Halbwachs 1980 in Gieryn 2000:481). In Corcoran’s study on

European neighbourhood's she found that residents in micro-communities formed a sense of place attachment in an area as small as a balcony that residents shared (2002:217).

Corcoran (2002), explains how place represents an environment that is experienced as opposed to examined or valued economically, "an environment seen as a personally relevant whole rather than as a distant set of divisible or abstract components" (Childress 1996:340).

Place stabilizes and gives durability to social structural categories, differences and hierarchies, place provides face-to-face interaction which produces social networks and place embodies cultural norms, identities, memories and values (Gieryn 2000: 473). "A sense of place is not only the ability to locate things on a cognitive map, but also the attribution of meaning to a built-form or natural spot" (Gieryn 2000:472). For Gieryn, places are made when people assign qualities "to the material and social stuff gathered there" (2000:472). Place can also sustain hierarchy and difference among people, by facilitating routines that continuously exclude people (Gieryn 2000:472). However, it is evident that places bring people together. It is argued that urban places in particular provide a place for association, diversity, public participation and overall, a community which is the aspect of place that this study focuses on (Fischer 1977 in Gieryn 2000:476).

Though place attachment comprises "positively experienced bonds", these bonds are tried in "the face of changes" in the processes, people, or places (Brown and Perkins 1992: 284).

Mary P. Corcoran discusses in her case study that in technologically advanced cultures, the opportunity for people to establish a sense of place has been weakened by the likelihood of increased spatial mobility and also by the "weakening of the symbolic qualities of places" (Relph 1976:66).

### **2.2.1 Third place**

Ray Oldenburg's work on place takes a perspective which is most relatable to today's contemporary society. Oldenburg is an urban sociologist who introduced the notion of "third place". He defines third place as "a place of refuge other than the home or workplace", where individuals can frequently visit and socialise with friends, neighbours, colleagues and even strangers (Mehta and Bosson 2010:780). The majority of Oldenburg's (1991) work on third place focuses on the social aspects of third places, how they are welcoming and comfortable and how they are a place to socialise and meet new friends (Mehta and Bosson 2010:780). Examples of third places include cafes, coffee shops, bars and pubs.

Charles Soukup explores Oldenburg's notion of third place in his study on the World Wide Web (2006). Soukup discusses that in contemporary American society, individuals lack a place that exists beyond their work and family life, he found this to be as a result of the emergence of "consumption-orientated culture" (2006:422). We now long for these third places more than ever. For the individual, third place enhances the feelings of "inclusiveness and belonging", and for the community, through social interactions, third place strengthens community ties (Soukup 2006:423).

For Oldenburg, the principal reason why individual's go to these third place's is to "enjoy each other's company" (Oldenburg 1982:269 in Soukup 2006:423). Third place caters for social interactions, the building of communities and for the expression of emotions and feelings (Soukup 2006:423). Oldenburg identifies third places, such as pubs and café's, as a way of "keeping in touch with reality", outside of the workplace and family life through the interacting and creating social ties with others (Oldenburg 1982: 280 in Soukup 2006:423). Under Oldenburg (1999), third places are easy to access, have a playful mood with conversation being the key activity and mainly, third places are "a home away from home" that have "regular's" (Soukup 2006:423).

### **2.3 Community**

‘Community’ is one of those words similar to ‘culture’, ‘myth’, and ‘ritual’ mentioned around in ordinary, everyday speech, apparently readily comprehensible to speaker and listener, which, when introduced into the discourse of social science, however, causes vast difficulty (Cohen 1985:11). Community is a blanket term which means all things to all people yet it continues to resonate through our everyday lives (Crow and Allan 1994:1). It stands for a short hand term for the broad realm of local relations or social arrangements found beyond the private sphere of home and family life, yet these are more familiar to us than the impersonal relations in society on a whole (Crow and Allan 1994:1). Corcoran argues that factors which we often associate with “community spirit” are essential in generating and maintaining positive feelings within the community, neighbourhood or organisation and these feelings then feed “into a sense of place and place attachment” (2002:207).

Anthony P. Cohen is a sociologist who has made a major contribution to community studies. According to Cohen, a community is a group or a category of people who have something in common with each other, which distinguishes them in a different way from other groups (1985:12). Therefore when we use the word community we are establishing a symbolic boundary around a particular class of people. Cohen argues that people construct community symbolically, making community a resource and a source of meaning, and a point of expressing their social identity (1985:9). For Cohen, “community thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference”, whereby the distinction of one community to others (1985:12). Here Cohen introduces the concept of boundaries.

Boundaries mark the beginning and end of a community (Cohen 1985). Cohen argues that the reason for these boundaries is an attempt by communities to distinguish themselves from others. Boundaries can be witnessed in different forms. Firstly, there can be national boundaries enforced in law, secondly, there can be physical boundaries such as a physical wall or fence and lastly there can also be racial or religious boundaries. Cohen introduces the concept of symbolic boundaries whereby the boundary is not so objectively apparent but rather thought of in the minds of those in the community, as a result this form of boundary may be perceived in different terms to different people (1985:12). For Cohen, symbolic boundaries highlight the importance of the community and what it means to different people.

Ferdinand Tonnies (1887), refers to community as a common understanding which is shared by others. Both Tonnies and Durkheim's work outlines how we are experiencing a loss of community. This loss of community is as a result of a shift from a traditional to a modern society in which there is less face to face interaction, enhanced desire for individuality and reluctance to cooperate on behalf of common purposes. For Tonnies (1887), we have shifted from a traditional society which he refers to as *Gemeinschaft*, in which relationships were a characteristic of rural life based on face to face interactions among family, friends and neighbors. He argues that the shift to an industrial society resulted in these institutions weakening and more individualistic and impersonal ways of life emerged (Tonnies 1887). Tonnies claims that we now live in a world that he refers to as *Gesellschaft*, where we feel a sense of isolation, a lack of cohesion and both resistance and conflict occurs frequently (Bell and Newby 1974:6).

This perspective on community can be also be seen in John G. Bruhn's work which contributes to our understanding of the significance of social connections when studying community in Sociology. In his book, "The Sociology of Community Connections", Bruhn's main argument is how social connections establish and maintain communities (2005). Bruhn

suggests that weak ties in social relationships have increased as a result of social and technological changes that have come about due to the process of modernity (Stalker 2005:1). As a result of these weak ties, Bruhn argues that these fragmented relationships are restricting one's social involvement in community and thereby limiting one's social capital (Stalker 2005:1). Bruhn's perspective on community is similar to Robert Putnam's work. In "Bowling Alone", Putnam grieves for the decline of social groups across the US (2000). For Putnam argues that in America, leisure activities, or any activity involving doing something with someone else, has declined resulting in a further decline amongst people in the workplace and even amongst family and friends (2000). It is evident that Putnam mourns for this collapse of community and social engagement in American societies. "The more integrated we are with our community, the less likely we are to experience social ills" (Putnam 2000:326-327). Fran Tonkiss has also described social life in cities in contemporary society as "isolating, as degrading of social ties and as inimical to community" (2003:297).

Much literature on community has outlined the eclipse and decline of it in recent years. Many sociologists have argued that this is a result of the process of modernity, the rise of individualism, the increase in technology and the overall decline in social activities.

However, other research suggests that aspects of community still exist. Herbert Gans carried out a study on urban villages in Boston during the 1950's. In "The Urban Villagers", Gans outlines how he discovered that in the suburbs there was not a decline in community but rather an increase in community life (1965). What he witnessed was that in these villages in the suburbs morals went up, loneliness and boredom was reduced and social and organisational activities multiplied (Gans 1965:409).

Sophia Watson's study on the marketplace outlines how markets are not recognised for their role of providing forms of social interactions, catering for a sense of community (2008:1589). Watson argues how the marketplace functions as a site for "social inclusion and the care of

others” and states that traders within the market drive these functions “acting as a focal point for the local community” (Watson 2008:1589).

Literature therefore suggests that aspects of community still exist throughout different places, settings and contexts. “Life in communities is warmer, more homely and affectionate” with aspects of harmony, solidarity and unity of purpose and co-operation throughout (Bell and Newby 1974: 6).

## **2.4 The Marketplace**

The theme of the market place is essential to my research study. The market place plays a significant role in acting as a social space. In the “Magic of the Mall”, Jon Goss gives a description of the marketplace in which he describes it as a place with “intoxicating energy of the crowd channelled within the confined public space” (Goss 1993:27). The marketplace is where, in relation to trade, there are aspects of fortune to be made and lost and it is a place where there is the “possibility of unplanned meetings and spontaneous adventures” (Goss 1993:27).

Sophie Watson in her study of “The Magic of the Marketplace: Sociality in a Neglected Public Space”, observes how the market place provides a site for social connections and interactions (2008). Watson’s study revealed the significance of the market place as a social space across four main dimensions which she referred to as, rubbing along, theatricality/performance, social inclusion and mediating differences (2008:1581). According to Watson, markets function as a social space through their provision of trade and consumption and she establishes how “the social” can be founded in a variety of ways including limited engagement such as an “exchange of glances” or thick engagement such as conversations and interactions with others (Watson 2008:1581). In her study, Watson calls upon Putnam’s (2000), “Bowling Alone” where he discusses the decline of social and leisure

activities across the US as a result of modernity. Watson argues how her findings represent a “counter-point” to Putnam’s as she argues how markets are not recognised for their role as providing a site for these social encounters that Putnam believes has declined (Watson 2008:1589).

Watson criticises that there has been limited analysis to date on markets and yet they offer a space for sociality and performance and argues that this limited research on markets has mainly taken place overseas and has focused on the market in relation to its economic role (2008:1578-1579). One study which does focus on the sociality of the marketplace is Joel Stillerman’s study on Chile’s street markets.

Stillerman’s 2006 study on street markets in Santiago identifies how the market place builds and maintains casual relationships (Watson 2008). Stillerman found that community activities provided by the markets enhanced a sense of place which further enhanced the “spatial routines” and “relationships” within the market (2006:517). “Rich social relationships” is what Stillerman found to be the main appeal for customers in the street markets, as well as their convenience to the locals and not forgetting the availability of fresh high-quality produce (2006:517). We can also see the theme of both place and community in relation to the market place run throughout Stillerman’s study. He found that vendors in the markets promote community activities to not just enhance their sense of place but the activities also intended to “cement bonds of loyalty” with their customers (Stillerman 2006:508).

A study by Rosemary D. F. Bromley discusses the changes in the marketplace in Latin America throughout the years as a result of the transformation in retail space but she also analyses how markets are still important in urban societies (1998). Bromley supports Watson’s finding that the “sociality of the marketplace” is the reason in which it has survived and prospered throughout the increasing changes in consumption (Bromley 1998:1314).

Retail markets have been declining in recent years and the reasons for this being as a result of competition from supermarkets, changing of styles and tastes, poor management and “natural retail trends” which independent businesses usually struggle from (Gonzalez and Waley 2012:966). Another main cause of the decline of public markets is the increase of gentrification and “urban restructuring” by the neoliberal state (Gonzalez and Waley 2012:966).

Gonzalez and Waley fear that the gentrification of traditional markets may put them beyond the reach of their clientele which is mainly working class, transforming them into a new “playground” for middle-class individuals who seek “authenticity and alternative consumption possibilities” (Gonzalez and Waley 2012:965-966). Gonzalez and Waley also argue that public markets in contemporary society offer potential for gentrification, they refer to it as a “classic setting for a gentrification process” in which there is a combination of growing middle class customers and landowners aware of the “potential rent gap with a vulnerable low-income clientele” (2012:968).

In Jon Goss’s, the “Magic of the Mall”, he discusses the nostalgia for the traditional public marketplace in contemporary retail (1993:28). Goss breaks down what he believes the ideal traditional marketplace consists of; the immediate relationship between the consumer and producer and the ability of them both to negotiate price and Goss claims that because there is competition among trader’s, presentation and service is very important (Goss 1993:28). In comparison, Goss states that such service and commitment is not expected to be seen among retail staff in large retail corporations (Goss 1993:29). According to Arnold et al. many academics today have argued that over the past few years, the creation and maintenance of loyal and satisfied customers is a vital feature for the survival and success of today’s marketplace (Arnold et al. 2005:1132). The study by Arnold et al. outlined how customers are expected to be satisfied when shopping in relation to product quality and service so as a

result it is simply not enough to focus on satisfaction, they argue firms should go “beyond satisfaction” and create “delighted customers” (Arnold et al. 2005:1141).

## **2.5 Changing consumer patterns**

Consumption has become a defining feature of our lives. “We are more than ever before consumers”, aspects of society including; identities, politics, the economy and the environment are significantly shaped by how and what we consume (Trentmann 2016:1). In this consumer society, our city centres are more recognised as sites of consumption than they are as cultural centres, our homes can be referred to as temples to the religion of consumerism and our lives are dominated by a combination of styles and tastes (Miles, 1998). According to Stillerman, advertising, branding and consumer credit has contributed to the ways in which our consumer society works today (2015). The development of the credit card means that consumers can now facilitate in many forms of consumption including online shopping, this shift in consumption means that we no longer have to leave the house to be a consumer (Stillerman 2015). The advent of the department store was one of the most significant moments in the development of consumer society and consumer culture. Corrigan argues that department stores provide consumers with a different experience of shopping as there is free entry, fixed prices, there is no haggling and bargaining and free entry also means that consumers do not have to purchase anything but they could simply be “just looking” (Corrigan 1997:50).

George Ritzer refers to the department store as a cathedral of consumption (2005:26). For Ritzer, as consumers we are enticed to these cathedrals of consumption “by the fantasies they promise to fulfil” (2005:26). As consumers in the department store we are faced with “dazzling decorations, architectural adornments, fairyland lighting, and a sophisticated display of mostly fashionable merchandise” (Laermans 1993:91). In the “Magic of the Mall” Jon Goss argues how in contemporary retail space there is a constant theme of nostalgia for the traditional public

market (1993:28). Goss states that when shopping centres are constructed developers have always “exploited a modern nostalgia for authentic community”, such a community that only exist in past places (1993:22). Gonzalez and Waley’s study in 2012 found that markets in Britain have been abused by “retail globalisation trends”, “real estate pressures”, and “urban renaissance” (2012:967). Shopping malls are identified as “new enclosures” which are claimed to represent the “insidious privatisation of our living space” (Speed 2008 in Watson 2008:1578). Due to this striking increase in malls and department stores, consumption patterns have shifted and as a result retail markets are now on the decline and at risk of disappearance.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides an overview of the significant themes which this study focuses on. The review has outlined the material and literature that has been written on these themes highlighting their significance to this study and to the study of Sociology. The theme of place was analysed in terms of the significance of place in Sociology, place attachment and the concept of third place. Community was also examined in terms of its importance to the study of Sociology and in terms of boundaries and the narrative of the eclipse in community. The review of the theme of the marketplace emphasised its importance to this study and how marketplace have been on the decline in recent years. Finally, the theme of changing consumer patterns demonstrated how developments in consumer society have resulted in changes in consumption patterns having a resulting impact on the public marketplace. All of the themes identified provide the foundation for this research and the basis for the analysis of findings.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methods**

### **3.1 Research question**

For this research project, I conducted a study on “How the Liberty Market is experienced, understood and visualised”. Qualitative research methods was the approach taken for the collection of data comprising of a series of semi-structured interviews with visual images used as illustration alongside the analysis. The themes explored in this study include place, community, the marketplace and hanging consumer patterns. These themes developed throughout the research for this topic and also throughout the collection of data for the study.

Sub-questions based on these themes for this study were also formulated including:

- How is the market represented?
- What social interactions exist among the traders?
- Is there a sense of community in the market?
- Do traders know their customers?
- How are the stalls presented?
- How is the market understood by its customers?
- Is there a sense of place attachment to the market?
- Has shopping patterns changed in the market over the years?

### **3.2 The Qualitative Approach**

Qualitative methods is a form of research which has a versatile approach that investigates culture, society and behaviour through an analysis of people’s words and actions (Hogan, J.,

Dolan, P. and Donnelly, P. 2009:3). Unlike quantitative data, qualitative methods is a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman 2008:380). Another contrast to quantitative research methods, which holds a strong belief in scientific methods, is that the qualitative tradition focuses on “inductive as well as deductive logic”, values subjectivities, welcomes multiple realities and perspectives and “recognizes the power of research over both participants and researchers” (O’Leary 2014:130).

Qualitative research is a general approach to the research of social phenomena (Marshall and Rossman 2006:3), this therefore allows qualitative research to closely focus on the qualities of experiences and features of life that quantitative researchers simply ignore (Hogan, J., Dolan, P. and Donnelly, P. 2009:4). Alan Bryman has made an argument that often qualitative research is explained in relation to how it differs to quantitative research. As a result, he claims that the issue with this is that qualitative methods end up being addressed as to what quantitative research is not (Bryman 2016:375).

In qualitative methods there are a number of ways in which the research can be conducted including; participant observation, interviews, focus groups, case studies and visual images. “The goal is to gain an intimate understanding of people, places, cultures, and situations through rich engagement and even immersion in the reality being studied” (O’Leary 2014: 130). This is a significant reason for why qualitative methods was most appropriate for this study as it has potential to provide rich and in-depth findings allowing me to gain an understanding of the people of the Liberty Market and the interactions and experiences that occur there every day. Merriam argues that the world and reality are not fixed, there are many interpretations and constructions of reality and qualitative research aims to gain an understanding of these interpretations “at a particular point in time and in a particular context” (Merriam 2002:4)

### **3.2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research**

Conducting qualitative research methods has many benefits for my study however there are also limitations to this research approach. Firstly for the advantages of using qualitative research methods. “The main strength of qualitative research is its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere” (David Silverman 2006:43). Qualitative methods can also allow researchers “a degree of flexibility” when conducting a study and can also enable the analysis of sensitive or problematic topics “if a relationship of trust develops between researcher and researched” (Christine Griffith 2004:6-7). Another final benefit of conducting qualitative research for this study is that it provided an analysis of the social world through the eyes of the people being studied (Bryman 2016:393).

Qualitative research methods however also have disadvantages. Firstly, the collection and analysis of qualitative data can be time-consuming and therefore expensive (Griffith 2004), nevertheless, because this study was on a more local and smaller scale, this limited this disadvantage. David Silverman discusses the concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research. According to Silverman, qualitative research focuses on long descriptions as opposed to statistics, arising the issue of reliability and the data also has potential to be biased, leading to the issue of validity (2006:46-47). In order to ensure my research findings were valid I had to identify my research methods, identify the sample being studied and develop an accurate conclusion on what was found (O’Leary 2004:61). Another limitation to conducting qualitative methods for this study is the issue of generalization, because this research solely focuses on a small selection of people in a certain locale it is argued that my

findings cannot be generalized (Bryman 2016:399). For the purpose of this study I do not want to generalize the findings as the study solely focuses on the Liberty Market.

Finally, we have the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity. According to O’Leary, objectivity specifies that findings and conclusions are entirely independent of personal subjectivities (2004:57). It has been argued that in qualitative research it is difficult to be entirely objective (O’Leary 2004). Due to past history and family connections to the area of the Liberty Market, the potential for subjectivity could have increased, however because I was aware of this it made me more conscious to aim to be objective throughout the study.

### **3.2.2 Reflexivity**

For Alan Bryman, reflexivity in social research implies that researchers should reflect on the consequences of their methods, biases and values (2016:388). As a result, my obligation as a social researcher meant that when I conducted my research I had to consider my social, cultural and political context (Bryman 2016:388). Coming from a working class background and being a University student are characteristics which had potential to have an impact on this study. I chose to do my research on Dublin’s Liberty Market because it was a place that I felt connected to as my family come from the area and going to the Liberty Market at the weekend was also a pastime for me as a child. This past history and experience in the market provided me with a familiarity of many of the stall holders, which thereby enhanced my confidence when approaching them for interview. Also, because I knew the area well, I was very passionate about this study and the research because it brought me back to my experiences of the market as a child.

### **3.3 Ethics**

“Because the objects of inquiry in interviewing are human beings, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them” (Fontana and Frey 1994:372). According to O’Leary it is obvious now that researchers have the responsibility in determining the “character of knowledge” which has resulted in a need for ethical awareness to be central in the research process (2004:42). There are many ethical guidelines which should be taken into account when conducting research and in this case particularly when conducting interviews.

The three main issues which are regularly mentioned in ethical research are codes and consent, confidentiality, and trust (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman 2004:219) .Thankfully, no such ethical issues arose during the interview process for this research for a number of reasons. Firstly, for informed consent. “The concept of informed consent emphasizes the importance of researchers accurately informing respondents/participants of the nature of their research” (O’Leary 2004:53).

I outlined my research assignment to each participant and informed them on their participation in the project and the topics that would be covered in order to ensure they were completely informed before signing the consent form. With regard to the ethical issue of confidentiality, I made a conscious effort to protect the identity of the participant providing the research data throughout the study. I did so by keeping the participant anonymous, agreeing to not make their identification public and I also stored the research data securely. Finally, with regard to trust, no ethical issues arose. As I meet my participants before the interview took place to introduce myself and because the participants knew my family connections to the market, they were very comfortable in my presence and trusted myself and the purpose of the research project.

“Ethics is foundational to all research” (O’Leary 2004: 50). To ensure no ethical issues arose in this research project, I also followed the guidelines of both the Sociological Association of

Ireland and the Maynooth University documents on ethics in research. Firstly, under the Sociological Association of Ireland guidelines, the main focus is to ensure that the researcher is aware that they have partly some responsibility in the way in which their research is used (Maynooth University, Moodle 2017). In relation to the Maynooth University ethical guidelines, when conducting research, data must be recorded in an accurate and clear format which must be held for a specific length of time and the publication of research findings must also be accurate, complete and definite (Maynooth University, Moodle 2017).

### 3.4 Sources of Data

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
A	Male	60-70	Stall Holder
B	Male	50-60	Stall Holder
C	Female	50-60	Stall Holder
D	Male	60-70	Stall Holder
E	Female	50-60	Stall Holder
F	Male	50-60	Stall Holder
G	Female	70-80	Stall Holder
H	Female	50-60	Stall Holder
I	Male	70-80	Local Shop Owner
J	Female	70-80	Customer
K	Female	70-80	Customer

#### 3.4.1 The case study approach

According to Merriam, the case study approach is a concentrated description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as a community, group, individual or an institution (2002:8). When conducting a case study, the researcher places emphasis on a particular setting, group or place. O’Leary discusses how case studies allow for exploration to be rich and in-depth, case studies examine the process as well as the outcome and they also explore the setting and context of what is being studied (2004:116). O’Leary further discusses the approach in highlighting the strengths and limitations of carrying out a case study.

Case studies are evidently a more practical approach to research as they involve examining one site or setting which means less transport and reduced costs which therefore makes the study “doable” (O’Leary 2004:116). This strength most definitely applies to this case study on the Liberty Market which involved the examination of one particular social space that was easy to access with little transport costs and overall a very “doable” project. Other benefits of conducting a case study include that they have potential to be unique but yet they can also contribute to providing supportive evidence in present theories and research (O’Leary 2004:116). Unfortunately, there are also limitations when conducting a case study. Although focusing on one particular setting, place or individual can reduce costs and can have ease of access, case studies also involve in-depth involvement and prolonged engagement (O’Leary 2004:116).

### **3.4.2 Interviewing**

Interviews as a form of collection of data has many benefits such as; it enhances the development of trust, provides in-depth qualitative information and are flexible, allowing the researcher to explore off-topics (O’Leary 2014:217). A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted for this study. Semi-structured interviews are not specifically fixed or free but are flexible (O’Leary 2004:164). According to Bryman, what makes interviews so attractive in social research is their flexibility (2016:466). Although I prepared specific

questions to ask my interviewees, I also allowed the conversation to flow. Semi-structured interviews are a more “conversational style of interview” in which interviewers are willing to explore any interesting topics that may develop (O’Leary 2004:164). However there can also be limitations to interviews such as absence of respondent secrecy and “resisting the urge to lead your respondents” (O’Leary 2014:219).

Overall I carried out a series of 9 interviews. I interviewed 6 stall holders, 1 shop owner and 2 customers. The length of the interviews ranged from forty minutes to an hour depending on the responses from the interviewees. For these qualitative interviews, I asked a variety of questions in relation to my research topic and sub questions, in order to gain as much in-depth and valuable information as I could. Two of the interviews involved me interviewing a married couple as they both worked at the market stall. Six of the interviews took place within the Liberty Market, not only was this more convenient for the traders but because they were comfortable in the setting of their own environment this increased the level of openness they had for me as a researcher. The shop owner was interviewed in his local grocery shop facing the market and the two customers were interviewed in their homes as they lived directly behind the market, once again this increased the participant’s level of openness as they were comfortable in their own setting.

### **3.4.3 Visual Images**

Visual research methods have become increasingly widespread throughout social research in recent years (Knoblauch et al. 2008). Visual research methods based on photography and video are acknowledged “as a subjective and reflexive form of qualitative data production”, and are now used in major fields of research including Sociology (Knoblauch et al. 2008:2). According to Christmann, “the special nature of photography is its depicting of visual characteristics of objects” (2008:2). However, it also argued that photographs do not merely capture reality, rather it they represent a photographic reality (Christmann 2008:2). It is

therefore essential that when capturing images, researchers must take into the account the spatial dimension, angle, background and framing of the visual image. For this qualitative research study, visual images were used as an illustration alongside the analysis of the data from the semi-structured interviews.

### 3.5 Analysis of data

**Figure 2.1:** An outline of the steps taken in this qualitative research project

Initial readings surrounding the topic of inquiry (identity and space)



Developing an idea, research question. 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)

Figure 2.1 highlights an outline of the steps taken in this research project. I firstly read and researched around the topic of place exploration. A research question was then formulated along with sub-questions which were based on themes that emerged throughout this research. Data for this study was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews and visual images which were used for illustration alongside the analysis. Analysis of the data was essential. The goal of qualitative methods is to interpret data and gain an understanding of the people and places being studied in order to incorporate meaning to the study. For interpreting and analysing the findings, I used the strategy of colour coding. For this method, I simply analysed my interview transcripts by using a highlighter and physically identifying the different themes that emerged. Each theme was given a different colour so that the findings were thereby analysed thematically. Coding the data enabled me to identify the significant findings throughout the interview transcripts and also highlighted how some themes overlapped with one another. Once the data was coded, this then formed the basis and framework for writing up the findings. The data was analysed thematically so I therefore wrote the findings under each of the themes that were established in Chapter 1 of the literature review and also created sub-headings for those new themes that emerged throughout the research process.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of qualitative research methods and its significance to this study. Qualitative research enables researchers to study varieties of social phenomena. This method of research was chosen for this study as it enabled me as the researcher to gain in-depth and insightful information about the Liberty Market through the process of semi-structured interviews. This chapter also acknowledged reflexivity, ethics, validity, reliability,

and generalisability in research, specifically their importance to the qualitative research approach.

## **Chapter 4: Discussion of Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This study set out to explore how the Liberty Market is experienced, understood and visualised by both its traders and clientele. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two identified the argument that the opportunity for people to establish a sense of place in contemporary society with technologically advanced cultures has been weakened by increased spatial mobility and the weakening of the symbolic qualities of places (Relph 1976:66). However, this study revealed an alternative argument. The series of semi-structured interviews conducted for this study revealed that features of the Liberty Market can be identified with Oldenburg's notion of third place in which both the traders and customers of the market experience a sense of place. It was also identified in the literature review in Chapter Two that it has been argued that in this contemporary society, the processes of modernity have resulted in an eclipse of community due to the weakening of social ties and encounters (Bruhn 2005). This study provides a counter-point to this argument as the study revealed that the Liberty Market forms and represents a social community comprising of trader and customer relationships, social encounters and symbolic boundaries.

Gonzalez and Waley claim that public markets have been on the decline in recent years due to the increase of competition, gentrification and urban renewal (2012:966). Although it is evident from this study that the Liberty Market has been affected by such issues, the findings also exposed that the survival and success of the market in today's contemporary society is as result of loyal and regular customers. The findings in this study are quite similar to those by

Sophie Watson's study on the marketplace (2008). One of the most significant findings in this study which is similar to Watson's is how the Liberty Market represents a neglected public space which caters for endless amounts of social relations, inclusions and encounters.

This chapter provides an overview of the analysis of findings that emerged in this study obtained from the series of semi-structured interviews. Visual images are also used as an illustration alongside the analysis of the findings. The findings in this chapter are analysed thematically as they are based on the themes and sub-themes identified in the literature review in Chapter Two. Further sub-themes also emerged throughout the study and are identified in this chapter.

## **4.2 Place**

In the literature review in Chapter Two, it was identified that the term place in Sociology is a tricky term to define, however, John Agnew's explanation of place is the one which provides the most efficient and relatable definition for this study. Place can be described as an "elastic area" which provides a setting for social relations that people can identify with (Agnew 1992:263). The findings in this study discovered that the Liberty Market represents an elastic area in which both traders and customers can identify with the endless amounts of social interactions and relations.

*Ah they love coming here, their telling one another their problems and showing each other how to knit. I won't go into detail but the women do talk about everything and anything on this stall of a Saturday and my daughter will be here tomorrow and everything goes at this stall, everything goes (Respondent D 2017).*

*Everyone in the area all love the market, they just love a ramble around ye know. Anyone that's from the area all know one another... You'll always meet someone you know. It's like a meet and greet (Respondent A 2016).*

The above findings represent how both traders and customers understand and experience the Liberty Market as a social space, a place where they can socialise with people they meet, chat about their problems and overall a place in which they can identify with. This finding also supports Fischer's claim that urban places in particular provide a place for association, public participation and diversity, all of which are features that the Liberty Market provides (Fischer 1977 in Gieryn 2000:476).

#### **4.2.1 Third Place**

Another significant finding in this study in relation to the theme of place identified that the central features of the Liberty Market are similar characteristic's to Oldenburg's explanation of third place. As outlined in the literature review in Chapter Two, Oldenburg identifies third place as a place that exist's beyond the home and the work place, where social interactions and community building takes place. Oldenburgs examples of third places's are genrally small businesses such as pubs or cafes, but for Oldenburg beyond the buying and consuming of goods is the social aspect of the third place and how they cater for endless amounts of social interactions, engagments and assocations.

This study established that the Liberty Market is a place that provides the setting for such social aspects thereby making it a third place. Mehta and Bosson discuss third place in relation to how it provide's a space where individual's can frequently visit and socialise with one another (2010:780). Responses from both traders and customers in the interview process for this study identified how the Liberty Market is a place where the customers and local's in particular, go to meet up with friends or family and to simply talk to others.

*A lot of people do meet on a Saturday, say people from Ballyfermot maybe someone from Crumlin and they meet and then they go into the café's and have a cup of tea and that. It becomes a meeting place for them (Respondent K 2017).*

*For the customers, this is history to them, it's a novelty it's something that they do every week. They come in the front doors and go around all the stalls and go out the back door and they meet up with their friends ye know. They feel comfortable coming here because they know ye (Respondent A 2016).*

Another finding identified here is how customers feel a sense of place attachment to the Liberty Market. For the customers, going into the market is a part of their history, its tradition, going into the market is something they do every week. This finding supports Corcoran's argument that "embedded within the concept of place are layers of sedimented meaning derived from memory, sentiment, tradition and identification with a spatial location" (Mary P. Corcoran 2002: 203). Traders and customers sense of place attachment to the Liberty Market support Simonsen's argument that "associational life", such as in the form of social interactions and personal relations that both traders and customers engage in, is a vital element to place attachment (1997:172). As it has been argued by theorists, such as Bruhn, that in contemporary society we are experiencing weak ties in social relationships, the findings in the study therefore represent how the third place becomes more essential and central for both the traders and customers of the Liberty Market.

Another characteristic of the Liberty Market which identifies it as a third place is how it has regular customers and also how it provides an environment in which they feel comfortable. Under Oldenburg's characteristics of third place, he identifies how such places have "regulars" because for them, the third place is a "home away from home" (Soukup 2006:423).

*Sometimes you'd meet people that lived around the area that you haven't seen in ages. My friend now, she'd come from Coolock all the way over here to the market,*

*she says every time when I come over here I go around the market and I know everybody, like faces that she hasn't seen for years (Respondent J 2017).*

*I think a lot is tradition, a lot of people are doing it for all their lives, they don't know any different. Ye know, they just feel, I do have customers say "oh god if I didn't come in here on a Saturday it wouldn't be my weekend", they'd be afraid they'd miss something. The customer's even get to know each other. You'd be surprised, even on a Saturday morning I could have three or four women that come at the same time and they only know each other from coming in here and they'd be having a chat there among themselves and one could be from the North side and one could be from the South side, they've never would of ever meet each other only from say being there every Saturday morning. It becomes like a little routine to them then (Respondent H 2017).*

Customers socialising with one another, meeting up at the same stall every week and making friends with complete strangers are all characteristics of the Liberty Market which Oldenburg would consider as a third place. The customers therefore experience and visualise the Liberty Market as a place beyond their home and workplace in which they actually socialise with strangers. Mehta and Bosson argue that within a third place, one of the main social aspects which they offer is a comfortable and welcoming environment (2010:780). One of the sub-questions in this study set out to find if traders knew their customers, when one particular trader was asked this they responded:

*They tell ye everything. They're just comfortable with ye I'd say ye know (Respondent G 2017).*

One customer also spoke of how they felt comfortable going to one particular trader in the market to speak to.

*He's very warm now he is. Like that he's more chatty to people too, do ye know what I mean? It's like someone to talk to, put their troubles onto to them they go home light (Respondent K 2017).*

What is evident here is that the Liberty Market is a third place which caters for social interactions, between traders and customers and among customers themselves, the expression of feelings and it is a place that provides a comfortable environment where regulars go to meet old friends and even make new ones. This findings provides a significant feature to the study of place in Sociology as it outlines the importance of the Liberty Market as a third place and how it becomes essential in this contemporary society in which individuals have potential to experience weak social ties.

### **4.3 Community**

Modern theories on social life in cities have described it as “isolating, as degrading of social ties and as inimical to community” (Tonkiss 2003:297). Some have argued that it in the context of urban settings it is irrelevant to discuss communities in relation to “self-sufficient social units” (Simonsen 1997:171 in Corcoran 2002:206). The findings in this research act as counter-point to these arguments.

One of the main sub-questions this study set out to find was “Is there a sense of community in the market?”. One of the most significant research findings which emerged from this study is how the Liberty Market forms and represents a social community. The social connections that exist between the traders, their interactions with the customers and the trust, bonds and entertainment among the stall holders all highlight the nature of community which evidently exists throughout the Liberty Market. This finding is also evident in Watson’s study on markets in which she identifies how “markets represent a much neglected public space and site of social connections and interaction in cities which is often not recognised” (2008:1578). When analysing this finding, it emerged that the theme of community could be sub-divided into two sub-themes including social connections and boundaries.

### **(4.3.1) Social Connections**

According to Crow and Allan, community “stands as a convenient shorthand term for the broad realm of local social arrangements beyond the private sphere of home and family but more familiar to us than the impersonal institutions of the wider society” (1994:1). This realm of local social activities is evident within Meath Streets Liberty Market for it is

*like an institution for people around here (Respondent C 2017).*

Although the main characteristic of the market is trade and consumption, The Liberty Market is a neglected public space, unrecognised for its role as catering for a social community. Significant findings in this case study support Bruhn’s argument on how communities are established and maintained by social connections (2005).

The research discovered that the social connections among the stall holders themselves were based on the qualities of trust, support and fun, or what they liked to call “banter”.

Trust among the stall holders was a striking feature in their relationships, acting as what Watson would refer to as “social glue”, holding the social networks in the market community intact (2008:1582). Many of the stall holders, particularly those in close proximity to one another, would offer to look after another trader’s stall.

*Ah see Jack, he’s a great asset for me. He goes off and I watch for him. We’ve our own little community here and we’re great. Ye don’t have to worry about anything, when he’s going home I say I’ll lock that up for ye in case someone is looking for something and he’d cover for me. We’d never be stuck here now (Respondent D 2017).*

*They’d help ye out if you’re stuck or anything, we know everybody would offer a hand (Respondent C 2017).*

Supporting one another was a major aspect of the stall holder's relationships, even one stall holder referring to another stall holder as an "asset" represents the respect and gratitude they have for one another. Looking out for one another's stall was a big part of their support for one another. Some traders would even go to lengths to actually step in for another if a stall holder was out, managing both their own stall and their neighbours stall.

*If one of them was stuck, I mean there was a girl last week she wasn't here so we ran her stall... again the trust is wonderful (Respondent E 2017).*

*We all look out for each other. Everyone trusts everybody we've all got that trust with each other. Everyone helps each other out, if he's not there I'll go over if I see a customer and try and sell for him. Everyone supports each other (Respondent H 2017).*

This action of stall holders looking out for one another is also evident in Watson's study in which she identifies the market community as a safe place where there is a sense of knowing that there is "someone keeping an eye out for you" (Watson 2008: 1583).

The notion of the market community as a "family" appeared in the findings several times.

Trader's spoke of how being a part of the market community is like;

*It's like as if your part of an outer term family, ye know, group like, you're not within their immediate family circle but like they know ye so long they consider ye like a part of their family (Respondent A 2016).*

Traders spoke of how foreign and non-national customers in the market could not comprehend how everyone, both traders and customers, knew each other and each other's names. This was a very significant finding in this research and one which was not identified in either Watson's or Stillerman's study.

*There was an American standing there one day, and they couldn't understand how everyone talked to each other, how everybody knew each other by first name. See people don't get that any more, like if you go into any of the shops in town nobody would know ye by name or nobody would know ye as a regular, where as in here it's like one big happy family (Respondent H 2017).*

Communal support was a significant feature running throughout the market. Another similar finding to Watson's study was how stall holders in close proximity to each other were more likely to look out for one another's stall (2008:1582), however, this study also found that within the Liberty Market when it came to a communal or serious issue, such as if someone was out sick or missing, everyone got involved.

*We're like a big family in here to be honest with ye. There's something wrong with someone, then were all concerned about what's going on. Never an argument and everyone gets on, someone's not in your worried about why they're not in (Respondent D 2017).*

These significant findings contribute to our understanding of how the Liberty Market is experienced, understood and visualised by both its traders and clientele. This finding also identifies how the Liberty Market represents a community that caters for social interactions and inclusions in an urban public space. These findings contradict assumptions made by both Bruhn and Putnam who argue that due to the processes of modernity and technological changes, social relationships and social groups have weakened resulting in a loss of community (Bruhn 2005 and Putnam 1995).

Although the findings in this study cannot be generalised for all markets, the findings establish that aspects of community still remain within the Liberty Market, the social relationships between the traders and customers strongly emphasis this.

Ferdinand Tonnies (1887) argued that we now live in a world where we feel a sense of isolation with less face to face interactions, the findings in this study portray a different

argument. A significant finding in this study discovered was how every trader interviewed felt that the local people and customers were a central element to the social community of the market. The relationships between the traders and customers shadow Watson's findings on her study of the marketplace. Watson found that traders in the market performed in many ways but they particularly took on the role for encouraging and maintaining "inclusive behaviour" and caring for others (2008:1583). Similar findings was found among the traders and customers of the Liberty Market.

*Ah Dear [name] they call me in here. I'm the agony aunt. No ye hear it all, ye hear all their aches and pains and all their family problems. Sometimes it's the only bit of conversation they have. Especially the older women now they come in, especially on a Friday, might be the only time to go out, to get their pension and they'll pop in and say even if it's not to buy anything they'll just have a little chat and it makes their day (Respondent H 2017).*

Customers of the market approaching trader's with their personal problems and issues was a significant finding to the trader and customer relationship. Traders comforted their customers and felt a need to care for and listen to them, especially for the older customers.

*Ah sure I get their life story. I've a few people laughing and say I have this aura around me for people to just come up out of the blue and just stop and literally tell me their whole life story. I don't know how many times that's happened, literally I've lost count. I hear a lot of it, I don't know if they're drawn to me, I don't know, and then they go off, so they have their weight off their shoulders and I'm exhausted because I'm trying to serve and try to listen to them and give them my sympathy and at least they've gone off lighter. Then I feel that's made my day. I do see the reward side in that where someone can actually walk away and say god I feel better now (Respondent E 2017).*

This affection and care for their customers was a striking feature in the trader's contribution to this third place community within the Liberty Market. This finding also supports Stillerman's claim that "rich social relationships" are the main appeal for customers into

public markets (2006:517). It was also a feature that was common among the majority of trader's interviewed.

*Ye see a lot of people are lonely so they come in and they have a chat, I think that's what it is especially older people, some of them probably don't see anyone from one end of the day to the other (Respondent C 2017).*

One customer interviewed, who lives behind the market, spoke of how one particular trader would allow her to bring the products home and see how they look in the house before actually buying them, further emphasising the trust in the trader/customer relationship which adds to the nature of the community.

*The lights, the chap that sells the lights now, he's very obliging, he's a lovely chap he is. If you were in the house and went around to him and you said aw I think it's that, he'd say aw leave it with me I'll go around and see what you're talking about, do ye know. He'd say take that around the house and fit it on, you know very obliging (Respondent K 2017).*

The conversations and banter between the traders and their customers was also highlighted in the study, a finding also acknowledged in Watson's study (2008). The playful banter and entertainment that seems to occur regularly in the Liberty Market is a feature that drives the social community, creating enjoyable encounters.

*Ah just the banter, the craic is great with all the lads that's around us even ye know. No one ever gets annoyed. Ye could say anything to one another in this place and it's like water of a duck, no one gets offended in here at all (Respondent D 2017).*

These findings echoes Corcoran's argument that community spirit is an essential factor in the success and maintenance of any community (2002). The positive feelings created by the traders in comforting and empathising with their customers feed's into their sense of place and attachment to the Liberty Market. The form of community and sense of place attachment

in the small location of the Liberty Market also supports Corcoran's finding in her case study on European neighbourhoods on how micro-communities can be form a sense of place attachment to an area as small as a balcony (2002:217)

#### **(4.3.2) Boundaries**

As noted in Chapter 1, Cohen claims that boundaries mark the beginning and end of a community (1985). A significant finding in this study mirrored Cohen's concept of symbolic boundaries as it was evident that within the market, some traders felt or witnessed boundaries more than others. This relates to how Cohen explains symbolic boundaries and how they are rather in the minds of those in the community (1985:12).

As discussed, it was evident that those traders in close proximity to one another were more inclined to socialize with and look out for one another. However, what appeared in the findings was that there was a divide between different sections of the market.

*We've a good make up down this end, we don't know enough of them up there. 2 or 3 we do, but down here we all seem to get on really well (Respondent E 2017).*

What this finding displays is how there is a sense of hierarchy among stall holders. It was evident from the interview process that those stall holders who spoke of the different "ends" in the market are the traders who have been there the longest. This significant finding supports Gieryn's claim discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two which is that places are capable of sustaining hierarchies and differences among people as they facilitate routines that have potential to exclude people.

#### **(4.4) The Marketplace**

As Gonzalez and Waley argued, public markets are on the decline and one of the main reasons for this is the increase in gentrification and urban restructuring in contemporary society (2012:966). The findings in this study demonstrate how the Liberty Market is located in area which is surrounded by increased gentrification.

*There is a lot going on around the area at the minute building wise. That Frawley's is being changed into student accommodation. Ye can see a change and there's little coffee shops popping up on the street (Respondent B 2017).*

Traders are well aware of the building and restructuring in the area. A local shop owner facing the Liberty Market spoke of the benefits of this gentrification to both the market and the Meath Street area.

*I think the future is good cause now what's going to be in the area will be a lot of young people like yourself, the student accommodation around here is going to be unbelievable. Frawley's and Thomas Street, is up to development up there. A lot of students and hopefully more housing (Respondent I 2017).*

Although it is evident that there is features of gentrification around the area of the Liberty Market, the findings in this study also support Arnold et al.'s view that the survival and success of today's markets in contemporary society is due to the creation and maintenance of loyal and satisfied customers (2004:1132). The Liberty Market is a concrete example that supports Arnold et al.'s argument as it provides an experience for the customer that drives them to frequently go back.

*Once you give value, and quality, there has to be a bit of quality in it, you'll always get a return customer and they're the best customers, the people who come back. Return customer is your best customer (Respondent I 2017).*

Gonzalez and Waley also spoke of how it is simply not enough anymore for firms to satisfy customers as that is what's expected in contemporary consumer society, firms should go

“beyond satisfaction” and create “delighted customers” (2012:1141). The findings in this study explore how the Liberty Market caters for the creation of these delighted customers through the quality of service from the traders and overall ambiance in the market itself.

*Say you get a mother that has 6 kids and she's coming in and say she's buying tracksuits for 25 euros each and she's buying 6 off ye on a certain day, and she'd say to ye "how much can you do me the 6 for?", she will get a discount on that price again. She won't have to ask a second time, where if she goes into a shop and that tracksuit is 50 euros and she's buying 6 of them, the only thing she'll get is a receipt. She won't get a haypenny discount. It's the loyalty and they know they can ask us for a discount, we may not always give it, but if it's there that we can we will do it (Respondent A 2016).*

Respondent A's quote expresses one of the fundamental characteristics of the Liberty Market and that is how it creates and maintains loyal and satisfied customers. Although public markets are declining and other forms of consumption are emerging, what makes the Liberty Market survive in this contemporary society is that it provides discounts and bargains to those customers who are loyal, encouraging them to go back. This is a perfect example of how the Liberty Market goes “beyond satisfaction” and creates the “delighted customer” (Gonzalez and Waley 2012:1141).



**Image 3. “Intoxicating energy of the crowd channelled within the confined public space” (Goss 1993: 27)**

Once again a significant finding in this study is similar to that acknowledged by Sophie Watson’s in her research on the sociality of markets in the UK (2008). As discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two, Watson explores how markets operate as a social space, where the “the social” can take place in many forms (2008:1581). This social nature of the market is evident throughout the Liberty Market among its traders and clientele.

*You’d often see mothers coming in here with 3 or 4 daughters and then their grandchildren and they’d all be together they’d meet up down here say of a Saturday and they go shopping. It’s sociable for them. Ye would’nt get a mother meeting up with her sisters or her daughters in Henry St. They’d come up here go for a cup of coffee and shop and spend the day here (Respondent B 2017).*

Traders revealed their understanding of the Liberty Market beyond the trade and consumption that takes place to how it is a social space in which customers view it as a meeting place to socialise with friends and family on a weekly basis. During the interview process, when

customers were asked what they would miss most if the market were to ever close, their answers further emphasise how they experience the Liberty Market as a form of social space.

*Ah I suppose you would miss rambling around, If you've nothing to do, you just go in and walk around it, pass a few minutes and you'd have a chat with someone in it (Respondent J 2017).*

*I hope to god now it won't. It's kind of company ye know, going in and around it (Respondent K 2017).*

This finding supports Bromley's claim that the "sociality of the marketplace" is the sole reason for why they have survived in this contemporary society (1998:1314).

For Jon Goss, the marketplace is a place which caters for "spontaneous adventures" and "unplanned meetings", all of which the research discovered takes place in the Liberty Market (1993:27).

*It's a gas place. Very good place, I reckon that, to be honest with ye, I reckon if Brendan O'Carroll came in here he'd get the best script ever. Just this particular stall that I'm on is just one of the funniest stalls of a Saturday. You've women coming over when me daughters here and everything goes, ye wouldn't know what they were going to talk about (Respondent D 2017).*

*The off chance you could be just going through and you would meet someone that you haven't seen in year's maybe or someone you used to work with you'd see them in it ye know (Respondent J 2017).*

Traders and customers spoke of these spontaneous adventures and unplanned meetings. For the trader, Respondent D spoke of how anything could happen at their stall, revealing the unplanned encounters, conversations and entertainment that occurs throughout the Liberty Market. Respondent J highlighted how customers experience the market through the chance of meeting someone whom they have not seen for years. Once again, these findings

demonstrate how the Liberty Market caters for endless amounts of social interactions and engagements which have prolonged its survival in contemporary society.

#### **(4.4.1) Presentation of Stalls**

One of the sub-questions in this study set out to find how the stalls in the Liberty Market are presented. During the interview process a significant finding emerged and that is how the presentation of stalls was an important feature for many of the stall holders within the Liberty Market, a feature which was not identified in Watson's study on the marketplace (2008). This was evident in an interview with one stall holder in particular, as they discussed how presentation was an essential aspect of their stall as their products are aimed at children.

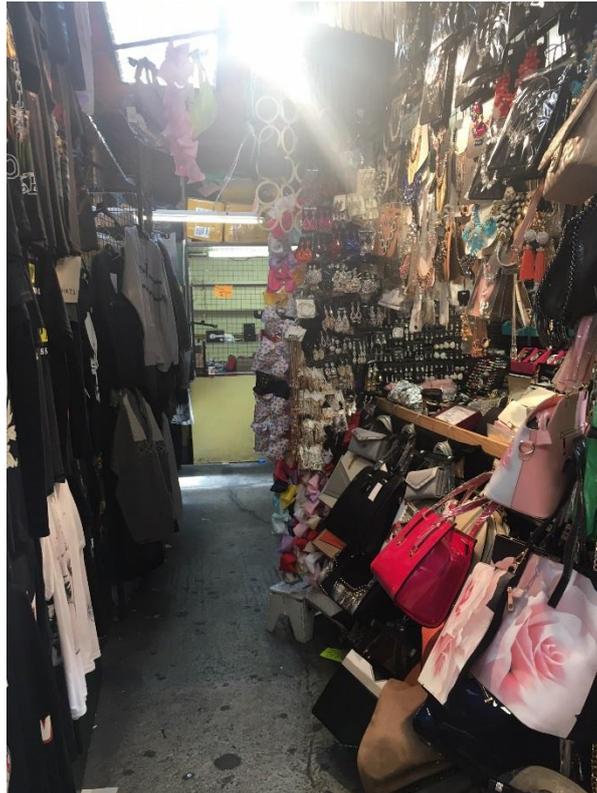
*Well yes, presentation means a lot and it does it all depends on actually how you promote yourself. Because our stall is for kids, what we did was we took the cage look off the stall so when you come down you don't see a cage you just see like a shop and that's exactly what we've done. So it doesn't put kids off or parents off it. So everything is covered up. It does make a big difference. So it works with the kids, it works with the parents. We've opened it up, no cage (Respondent E 2017).*



#### **Image 4. “Presentation is everything”**

Image 4 above reveals the importance of presentation for stall holders. The colours, lights and animation all act as focal points for drawing the trader’s target audience in which in this case is children. What the trader has created is a fun and bright stall and the dull cage look has been eradicated. Dismantling the cage look and adding lights, colours, toys and an overall vibrant presentation can be seen as an attempt by the stall holders to not associate the Liberty Market with features of the shopping mall that Speed claims represent themselves as “insidious privatisation of our living space” (Speed 2008 in Watson 2008:1578). The Liberty Market is a public retail space in which customers are free to ramble around and observe the open stalls. Other stall holders who sold products such as clothes and handbags also felt presentation was essential for boosting sales, the findings revealed that colours and the latest items were displayed at the front. This finding supports Goss’s claim that because there is competition among trader’s, presentation and service is very important (Goss 1993:28).

*What we think is the winners to the front and colours make it eye catching that when they come around that corner something catches their eye, even if they weren’t going to buy it will kind of make them want to buy it. You just keep rotating all your colours (Respondent H 2017).*



**Image 5. “Contrasting Colours”**

#### **4.5 Changing consumer patterns**

This study has explored how the Liberty Market represents a social community within the area of Meath Street, identifying how both traders and customers experience the market as a third place which caters for social interactions and relations. The primary function of markets however is the buying and selling of goods and in recent years public markets have declined as a result of gentrification and urban renewal but also as a result of changing consumer patterns.

According to Stillerman, the development of the credit card was a triumph in the development of consumer society, consumers can now participate in many forms of consumption, such as online shopping (2015). The effects of online shopping can be seen in the consumption patterns within the Liberty Market.

*The younger generation isn't coming in as much and a lot of people are actually working online now, like Littlewoods and Boohoo. Their sitting at home and they're not coming out. So I mean years ago this market was booming, thriving. I mean it was like sardines in a tin here, not anymore unfortunately (Respondent E 2017).*

Findings in this study identified how traders within the market are feeling the impacts of changes in consumption patterns. It was noted among the majority of stall holders interviewed that it is the younger generation who simply are not going to the market to shop, because as Stillerman said, this shift in consumption means that we no longer have to leave the house to be a consumer (2015).

*I think the young generation has been ruined from the boom times that they just got used to credit cards, used to money and they've never experienced, like there's a whole generation out there that never experienced the market life cause they never had to cause money was flush (Respondent H, 2017).*

Traders revealed a sense of nostalgia when discussing how the Liberty Market used to be year's ago. Before the emergence of online shopping and the ability to shop at home, consumption within the Liberty Market was booming. Today however, as a result of changing consumer patterns, both traders and customers are aware of the decline in the market in recent years in relation to the consumption of goods.

*Even customers come in and out and they say to ye my god I remember when you wouldn't be able to walk through here, you'd be heaving along (Respondent G 2017).*

*It was like a magnet here on Friday and Saturday, it was like a religion, you couldn't get in that door there ye know, unless you were a sardine. It would be rare where you wouldn't be able to get through the market now (Respondent A 2016).*



**Image 6. “It’s like everything else, it comes and it goes” (Respondent K 2017).**

The increase in shopping malls, department stores and euro saver shops was also another feature identified in the study that has had an impact on the Liberty Market.

*I’ve seen the real boom years in here, I’m talking about boom. Where ye know you took in that much money you had to weight it you didn’t even count it there was so much money coming in but now, totally changed as in with all the shopping centres open. The whole shopping culture has changed, ye know younger people are shopping online now as well (Respondent A, 2016).*

Although it is evident that the Liberty Market is not as busy as it was years ago due to the emergence of department stores and online shopping, it still remains one of the longest running markets in Dublin. The findings revealed that although traders were aware of the

decline in business in the market they also revealed that there are people who still go to the Liberty Market because they rely on it.

When traders were asked why they thought it was that people still go to the market among all these changes in consumption, many revealed that the quality of service in the Liberty Market surpasses that of department stores and retail corporations.

*There's a lot of people now that still rely on the market ye know and these are people that have a certain budget there trying to manage on and the market caters for them, the bigger shops don't. We do cater for a certain cliental in here which is good ye know and those people will still support us, like they won't dessert us (Respondent A)*

*It's just that little extra touch isn't it, everybody says, it's like that more personal touch. Some shops you go into and ask them for something and it's nearly an effort (Respondent H 2017)*

This finding supports Jon Goss's distinction between the marketplace and large retail corporations which is outlined in the literature review in Chapter Two. For Goss, the marketplace comprises of immediate relationships between customers and traders, bargains and good quality service (1993:28). In contrast, Goss argues that large retail corporations do not provide such service and commitment to their customers (1993:29). The Liberty Market provides this good quality service to their customers whom rely on them and in turn the stall holders know that those customers will always support them.

In the "Magic of the Mall", Goss also claims that in contemporary retail space there is a nostalgia for the traditional public market (1993:28). This was evident in the findings in this study as traders spoke of how some of their customers go to the market to reminisce as they feel a sense of nostalgia for it in this consumer society surrounded by modern department stores and large corporations.

*I think this is the oldest, it is actually the oldest market in Dublin. I think a lot to do with this market is, it's the look a the place. If this was real modern they wouldn't come in the door (Respondent D 2017).*

*I mean ye get people coming in here and their saying oh my god its years since I've been in here and saying it hasn't changed or it has for the better. Some of them just come in to reminisce and just walk around... Even though it looks like a dump of a place, but the character and there's so much history in this place. I think everyone in Dublin has some sort of, either their parents or their grandparents were brought up and reared around here and kind of moved out and once in a blue moon they might say aw we'll go into the liberties we haven't been there in years (Respondent E).*

These responses from Respondent D and E both highlight this nostalgia that Goss discusses for the public market in which people go to the Liberty Market to reminisce, they enjoy the old historical look of the market in contrast to the modern look of contemporary retail stores in which Ritzer describes as “cathedrals of consumption” (2005:26).

Changing consumer patterns in contemporary society have evidently had an impact on the business in the Liberty Market, nevertheless, once again, it is the social nature of the market that has sustained its survival as well as customers who are loyal and enjoy to reminisce in Dublin's longest running market.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has revealed the significant findings that emerged throughout this study on the Liberty Market. The qualitative semi-structured interviews provided in-depth and insightful information for this research. As both traders and customers were interviewed in their own environment in which they felt comfortable, their level of openness and engagement was a huge benefit to the findings in this study.

The most significant and striking finding which emerged from this study is how the Liberty Market is experienced, understood and visualised as a third place. Oldenburg defines third

place as a place of refuge other than the home or workplace where individuals can visit and socialise with one another (Mehta and Bosson 2010:780). The findings in this study demonstrate how the Liberty Market is a place which provides for such association among the stall holders and their clientele. The stall holder and customer relationship was an essential feature which catered for this sense of third place as customers felt comfortable in the presence of the stall holders because, as Oldenburg describes it, the market is like “home away from home” (Soukup 2006:423).

Another key finding this chapter highlights is how the Liberty Market forms and represents a social community. The existence of a social community within the Liberty Market in this contemporary society acts as a counter argument to theorists such as Bruhn who has argued that the process of modernity has brought with it weak ties in social relationships (Stalker 2005:1). A chief finding in this study identifies how a sense of community runs throughout the Liberty Market which is emphasised by the social interactions, encounters and relations that exist among both the stall holders and their clientele.

Finally, the findings in this study demonstrate how the Liberty Market has declined in recent years due to changing consumer patterns and gentrification in the Meath Street area.

However, significant findings also highlight that the survival of the market in this contemporary society is due to its social nature which both traders and customers experience consequently resulting in the Liberty Market having loyal and regular customers in which both traders and their customers rely on each other.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

According to Gieryn, a place is remarkable (2000:471). Place exploration in Sociology enables researchers to gain a social understanding of people’s experiences, perspectives and meanings of place. The goal of this research was to discover how Dublin’s Liberty Market is

experienced, understood and visualised. Although this study noted the primary function of public markets as the buying and selling of goods, it went beyond this feature and explored how both traders and customers experience, understand and visualise the Liberty Market as a social space.

Chapter One, which included the introduction and the incorporated setting the scene chapter, outlined the primary research question and sub-questions for this study, the significance of this research to the study of Sociology and provided an overall background of the Liberty Market and the surrounding Meath Street area. The literature review in Chapter Two identified the essential themes that this study examined. Sub-themes for this study also emerged throughout the process of collecting the data. Each theme, including place, community, the marketplace and changing consumer patterns played a key role in forming the basis for this research. Significant themes that contributed to this study and analysis of findings was third place, place attachment, the narrative of the eclipse of community, gentrification and urban renewal, and association in the form of social interactions, relations and encounters. Chapter Three then identified the research methods which was qualitative research methods. The use of qualitative research methods for this study contributed greatly to the in-depth and insightful information gained from the semi-structured interviews. The use of visual images as illustration also complemented the data throughout the study which added to the significance of the findings. Findings in this study were also quite similar to those noted in Sophie Watson's study on the marketplace (2008).

Chapter Four then provided an analysis of the discussion of findings. The findings in this study emphasise the importance of this research and its contribution to the study of Sociology. Gonzalez and Waley claim that public retail markets have declined in recent years as a result of urban renewal and gentrification (2012:966). Although the study acknowledged this argument in terms of how the Liberty Market has declined in recent years, a significant

finding emerged which discovered that the reason for the markets survival in modern society is as a result of loyal and regular customers whom rely on the market. The main features which draw these customers to continuously return to the market is the social nature that exists throughout it which is implemented by both traders and their clientele.

This study on the Liberty Market has revealed how it identifies as a third place. In this contemporary society, we long for third places more than ever. The Liberty Market creates a space for both its traders and clientele to socialise and interact with others thereby building a sense of community. Arguments made by theorists, such as Bruhn claiming that due to the processes of modernity there has been an increase in weak ties in social relationships and a decrease in individuals involvement in community (Stalker 2005:1), is what makes the findings in this study so significant. This study reveals the importance of third place in contemporary society and how the Liberty Market enables its customers and traders to form social relationships, get involved in the community and thereby increasing their social capital.

Findings in this study also portrayed strong counter arguments to Putnams (2000) argument on the decline of community among individuals, friends and even family in contemporary society. This research revealed how the Liberty Market represents a social community within which friends, families, mothers and daughters, sisters, and much more, meet to socialise.

The caring aspect of the stall holders towards their clientele also emphasise the nature of the community which runs throughout the market which supports Bell and Newby's claim that in communities, life is warmer, more affectionate, with aspects of harmony throughout (1974:6).

Other findings in this study explored how the Liberty Market has been affected by gentrification in the area and changing consumer patterns. What also proved to be a significant finding was how many of the traders acknowledged that their regular and loyal

customers are essential for the survival of the market. The interviews also identified how there are more young people beginning to move into the area.

Further research on this study could explore the younger generation who are now moving into Meath Street to discover firstly, what impact they are having on the market and the street, but more significantly to explore if they have a sense of place attachment to the Liberty Market or do they feel involved in the social community. It would be interesting to discover similarities or differences among the younger generation who are moving into the area in comparison to the loyal and regular customers who experience, understand and visualise Meath Street as a third place that forms a sense of community. Further study on this research could also expand to discover if other public retail markets across Dublin, or even the country, entail the same characteristics and features of the Liberty Market.

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## **Appendice A**

### **Consent Form**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my assignment for my Fieldwork Methods Module at Maynooth University, NUIM. My research is designed to explore

How the Liberty Market is experienced; understood and visualised. In my research I am going to explore the social encounters and interactions that exist in the market among the traders and customers. I am also going to explore how this contributes to a sense of community within the market place.

This interview will take up to one hour and with your permission I would like to tape record the conversation. A copy of the interview tape will be made available to you afterwards if you wish to hear it.

All of the interview information will be kept confidential. I will store the tapes/notes of our conversation safely. Your identity will be kept confidential and I will use a code number/pseudonym to identify your interview data. Neither your name nor private information will appear in the final research project.

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to refuse to take part, and you may refuse to answer any questions or may stop at any time. You may also withdraw at any time up until the work is completed.

If you have any questions about the research, you may contact me at

0857666510

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

### **Transcription of interview December 7<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Interviewer:** How long have you worked in the Liberty market?

**Respondent:** Myself, I've worked about 40 years in the market here, worked here from a child. My father had a shop further down Meath Street, number 39 where the chemist is now. An I started there when I was about 13 and then a couple of years later this market opened here and I've been here from day one more or less, since the doors opened, and I'll probably be here till the days that it close. My father, he had a stall up the back here and he was 96 years of age in January this year, he had a stall up the back there and he passed away then in August of this year. He was like the king of the market here. He was the first one in and he always said he'd go out in a box so. He would a been one of the main drawers of people into the market, customer wise. In the early days he was the main business man here, he'd buy and sell ya ye know.

**Interviewer:** So all of the customers knew him?

**Respondent A:** Oh they did ye, his name was Harry Armstrong and they all call me Harry. Even people today like, they buy something off me and most of them would say thanks Harry and how ye Harry. They refer, like its me father, that's the way they're talking.

**Interviewer:** And you are here since the age of 13?

**Respondent A:** Oh it is a long time ye know, but I've seen the real boom years in here, I'm talking about boom. Where ye know you took in that much money you had to weight it you didn't even count it there was so much money coming in but, now, totally changed as in with all the shopping centres open. People outside and then people moved to Tallaght and Clondalkin, Lucan and everything else, so there's a much wider area for shopping now.

**Interviewer:** How would you describe the community in the area?

**Respondent A:** Aw it's a real community market ye definitely. We in the early days, we got people coming in from Ballyfermot, Clondalkin, Drimnagh, you know, Walkinstown. It was

like a magnet here on Friday and Saturday, it was like a religion, you couldn't get in that door there ye know, unless you were a sardine. It would be rare where you wouldn't be able to get through the market now. That's the way it's gone. But ah ye definitely a community. All the older customers used to come in and they'd always meet up in the restaurant there in the corner, they'd have their dinner in there with each other. Now ye might sort of see them coming through here and then they'd say "I'm going up Thomas Street to Mannings, if Mary comes along will ye tell her I'm up at Mannings". You're like a tour guide for them as well. That bit of banter is there all the time ye know. For the customers, this is history to them, it's a novelty it's something that they do every week. They come in the front doors and go around all the stalls and go out the back door and they meet up with their friends ye know. They feel comfortable coming here cause they know ye. It's like as if your part of an outer term family, ye know, group like, you're not within their immediate family circle but like they know ye so long they consider ye like a part of their family. Like I've people coming in here like, I sold a lady slippers about 25 years ago for 5 pounds and I now have slippers out there for 8 euros and I still get people coming over and saying "where's the slippers you had for 5 pounds?" Sure we haven't used pounds for the last 20 years, but it's still in their mind, they still see that sign that says 5 pounds. Everyone in the area all love the market, they just love a ramble around ye know. Anyone that's from the area all know one another. The area wouldn't be the same if the market wasn't here, it's a part of the heritage. You'll always meet someone you know. It's like a meet and greet. I know them and they know me. If it was gone, Meath St would be gone. I can assure you if this market went, within a year I reckon half of the shops on the street would go as well.

**Interviewer: Do you think traders know their customers?**

**Respondent:** Ah ye I mean you'd notice when the older customers go missing. We used to have a woman that comes in and she was a replica for the Queen of England, she was elderly, she was about 76 and she came in on Friday's and maybe Saturday's but she used to do her hair up lovely and the jewellery on the hands. As a gesture every week when I came in, I'd nearly bow in front of her and she used to say "I'm not the Queen, I'm not the Queen", and I'd say oh god you look like her ye know, messing, I had a great bit of banter with that woman. But she's gone now obviously, I haven't seen her for two years. Now I don't know her by name, I don't even know where she lived but she used to just come every week and all

of a sudden she's disappeared. And then there was other people like that around ye know that you'd have a bit a craic with and they've, they're just gone, so you don't see them anymore. They could be in a nursing home, you don't know, ye know. We don't get too personal with people like as in where are ye living, we more or less have, the personality we have is your face ye know that's what we see and that's who we know.

**Interviewer:** How do you think the traders interact with each other?

**Respondent:** All the traders are fairly okay now ye know. They watch out for each other like. There's a lady there now, when she goes up the back there with her stuff she asks me to keep my eye on her stuff and vice versa ye know. We look out for each other, we keep an eye on each other's stalls. There's 50 stalls in here and of the 50 there's probably about 4 different nationality stands and the rest of them are all Irish. I like to welcome everyone. Let's put it this way if they don't step on your toes and their friendly to me, then I'm going to be twice as friendly to them. I don't prejudge anyone coming in here. There in here to trade and I always sort of remember the time I came in so someone would of prejudged me say at that time. Just let them come in, let them do their bit of business and let's see how we get on and that's my motto in here. All of the traders that's here since the market opened, there's probably only about say 10 existing long-term people here. Other people drifted away, other people like probably got jobs actually which was more secure in the latter years. In the early years if we were offered jobs anywhere we wouldn't of took them no way were we going to take them, we were earning great money and we were our own bosses. But the situation has changed around in the last few years where by you would actually struggle to make a proper living here. Now when I say struggle to make a proper living what I mean by is ye might get a days wages but then again ye mightn't, you come in here on a rainy day, you'll do your days work but you won't get paid for the day, that's the problem.

**Interviewer:** What is your relationship like with your customers?

**Respondent:** I've loads, loads of loyal customers. Great bit a craic with them, great bit a banter. Sometimes I'm busy here and the customers are talking to me about problems there having and all and as much as I'm listening, I'm sort a keeping me eye on me stock as well and don't want to get to involved with their problems but at the same time I still listen to them to ye know to try and keep them a bit of comfort there ye know. And they do come along and tell ye certain problems so you have to give them a bit of comfort. Ye their loyal customers alright, definitely without a doubt. Nobody would rob from me. I don't' have to sit at my stall all day. You ask anybody around here would they take anything off me, no! They just don't do it. That's the bond and relationship we have. Now I'd only know very little names. We have nick names for them in here alright. Say a woman comes in and she buys loads of handbags anall, I know a woman who used to come in and do that and her name was Mary. She'd be in the market and we'd say aw here's Mary Handbags, here's Tommy cakes, he'd be in buying cakes. So ye put their first name and the label with them, but we wouldn't even know their second name. We never knew their second names. So we sort of gave them a name in here.

**Interviewer:** Has the presentation of the stalls changed?

**Respondent:** In the boom times in here, if you wanted a stall that was only maybe 6 foot, and say there was someone deciding to move out of it, you wouldn't give a second thought about giving that person 5,000 euros to move out quicker! Because you knew you were going to make serious money out of that little space there. Now you wouldn't give a hundred euros for that stall. Before, I could get up at half 4 in the morning to come in here. If your stall wasn't set up here and up and functioning by 6 o'clock in the morning you were losing business. Now you could come in at 11 o'clock and you wouldn't be losing business. You'd be in at 5 o'clock in the morning and you wouldn't actually be packed up until 7 o'clock at night. That's how busy it was.

**Interviewer:** How has the market changed throughout the years?

**Respondent:** The atmosphere has changed totally over the years. I mean I even here people coming in and saying god it's empty. Whereas years ago it used to be, "aw I can't get in this

door, we'll go around the side". I've seen the real boom years in here, I'm talking about boom. Where ye know you took in that much money you had to weight it you didn't even count it there was so much money coming in but now, totally changed as in with all the shopping centres open. The whole shopping culture has changed, ye know younger people are shopping online now as well. A lot of people in here now won't do credit cards for instance, Alan who has his stall there around the corner, he does credit cards and even though it's not the end all and be all of his business, he finds that sometimes, he didn't lose the sale because he had that facility. Whereby the smaller traders can't afford to have that facility and they lose that little bit of business. There's a lot of people now that still rely on the market ye know and these are people that have a certain budget there trying to manage on and the market caters for them, the bigger shops don't. We do cater for a certain cliental in here which is good ye know and those people will still support us, like they won't dessert us. Say you get a mother has 6 kids and she's coming in and say she's buying tracksuits for 25 euros each and she's buying 6 off ye on a certain day, and she'd say to ye "how much can you do me the 6 for?", she will get a discount on that price again. She won't have to ask a second time, where if she goes into a shop and that tracksuit is 50 euros and she's buying 6 of them, the only thing she'll get is a receipt. She won't get a happenny discount. It's the loyalty and they know they can ask us for a discount, we may not always give it, but if it's there that we can we will do it.

**Interviewer:** What you have learned over the years from your experience of working in the Liberty Market?

**Respondent:** The market was the best education I ever got. You couldn't get O levels and A levels for the education you got in here. This was the best education for your kid's anall. My son learned the structure of what life is all about in here. He learned the structure of the value of money. Hard working gets you places. Brilliant memories, excellent memories. Great times in here.