II The centennial legacy of the 1916 Rising: The contested politics and spatiality of urban heritages and memory

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> *'The story of 1916 dwarfs everything else, trading life on the street should be celebrated'* (Historian Barry Kennerk, quoted in *Irish Independent*, 11/4/2015).

Moore Street in Dublin is best known as the location of the city's oldest food market. But its location beside the General Post Office meant that it formed part of the stage on which the drama of the 1916 Rising was played out. It is central to the story of Easter Week because the leaders of the 1916 Rising issued their surrender from numbers 14-17 Moore Street. The street has thus assumed significance in national narratives of the Rising and 'Irish' identity, and has become a rallying point for campaigners who wish to recognise landmarks and sites associated with the insurrection and Ireland's eventual independence. However, throughout the 20th century this had become one of the most neglected parts of the inner city as focus shifted to addressing the housing crisis in the city through suburban developments and the creation of 'new towns' on the edge of the city (Brady, 2014). The introduction of the Urban Renewal Act in 1986 marked a shift in central government policy as regeneration of the inner city became a priority, but despite repeated plans and proposals for this particular area, it is only since the turn of the millennium that sustained attention has been focused on its potential redevelopment. The interplay between this current development context and the historical legacy of the street has been fraught. This paper examines the intersection between the politics of planning, livelihood strategies and historic commemoration as they play out in this space. We draw on an analysis of newspaper articles and a review of official government documents relating to the Moore Street area over a twenty-five year timeframe. The story that emerges is extremely complex. We argue that understanding these relationships is critical to a more informed politico-economic and socio-temporal spatial understanding of the legacy of the 1916 Rising.

Introducing Moore Street Market

Moore Street market has long been a central feature of Dublin's inner-city environment and is Dublin's most recognised marketplace. It is also Dublin's oldest open-air market, and dates back to the mid- to late-eighteenth century (Kennerk, 2012). Traditional markets are important public assets and, from the 1960s, the market became a significant economic resource for working class, inner-city residents because of the decline of traditional industries and the relocation of businesses to Dublin's suburbs (Brady, 2016). This economic restructuring resulted

in significant job losses for men employed in traditional labour, for example, in Dublin's docklands, where the unemployment rate for heads of households in parts of the north docklands in 1986 was at 70% (Moore-Cherry and Vinci, 2012). Markets produce social value in a number of different ways and contribute to a more inclusive city – a fact usually overlooked by government authorities and developers. With easy access, flexibility and minimal start-up costs, the market became an important source of income for working class women in the locality in the 1960s and 1970s. Using the household's baby pram to double as a cart, women from the inner-city walked the kilometre from Smithfield's wholesale market, where they purchased cheap fruit and vegetables, to sell informally to other locals in the Moore Street market. The converted prams later became a powerful symbol of female traders' resistance and resilience during crackdowns on street trading in the 1980s (Weir, 2012; Kennerk, 2012). Through protest and political supporters, who maintained that the traders had a constitutional right to earn a living, the traders managed to obtain some concessions; the market and trading became increasingly formalised through licensing and regulation, and remains a symbol of the city to this day.

However, since the beginning of the present century, the character of the street has changed dramatically. In many cases globally as the push for more intensive and compact redevelopment has gathered momentum, underinvestment in markets and chronic neglect has emerged to threaten both markets and market livelihoods (Gonzalez and Dawson, 2015; Gonzalez and Waley, 2013). In response, traders and long-term market users have often triggered campaigns to protect traditional marketplaces (Dines, 2009). On Moore Street in 2016, the number of stallholders and traders was greatly diminished (due perhaps to uncertainty over proposed redevelopments) and the area was more ethnically diverse. It comprised a mix of shops and market stalls, including some women traders of produce, meat and fish, who were third or fourth generation stallholders. Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, the street has witnessed a social transformation with the arrival of immigrant traders and shopkeepers, particularly of African, South and Southeast Asian, and Chinese origin (White, 2002). Offering a variety of speciality ethnic products and retail services catering for Dublin's migrant communities, these migrant traders have maintained the market's vibrancy. Unfortunately, traditional trade has gradually declined due, in large measure, to the closure of the wholesale market in Smithfield in 2002, increasing stall fees imposed by Dublin City Council, and the arrival of international discount retailers – such as Aldi and Lidl – who anchor newly-constructed developments on the surrounding streets, providing low-cost fruit and vegetables in direct competition to the traditional marketplace. Traders would also argue that repeated requests to the local authority to make basic investments that would enhance trading conditions – such as the provision of adequate street lighting – were deliberately ignored and are illustrative of a process of official gradual disinvestment.

The politics of redevelopment

Since the late 1990s, numerous plans have been proposed by Dublin City Council for the redevelopment of Moore Street but due to planning issues, the vagaries of the property market and speculation, none of them have been realised, leaving the market traders in a kind of 'limbo-land' (Wallace, 2015). In 1998, as part of broader redevelopment plans for the city, Dublin City Council proposed an Integrated Area Plan (IAP) for O'Connell Street that extended into the adjoining areas, including Moore Street. A compulsory purchase order was made by the city council for parts of Moore Street and O'Connell Street, surrounding the old Carlton Cinema site, in an attempt to generate some development momentum on one of the most visible and strategically located derelict sites within the city. This attempt failed. In 2005, Joe O'Reilly of Chartered Land, a developer who had been amassing a significant landbank in the area, applied for and received planning permission for a large-scale retail complex. Although for many years the National Graves Association and others had highlighted the historic importance of Moore Street in relation to the 1916 Rising (discussed above), it appears that imminent redevelopment on the street was a key catalyst to spur a heritage campaign into action. Campaigners focused initially on the protection of one building of particular significance – number 16 Moore Street. After negotiation between the city manager, the planning authority and developers, a preservation order was placed on number 16, and a wider block comprising houses numbers 14-17 was declared a national monument to be refurbished by central and local government. This would sit within the broader redevelopment, a decision that was appealed successfully by campaigners to An Bord Pleanála (Planning Appeals Board) in 2009. However, at this point the nature of the campaign changed as the heritage lobby splintered between those who focused on number 16 and felt their objective had been achieved and those who argued for the preservation of a more extensive area.

Since mid-2013, there has been a significant escalation in the intensity of the heritage campaign, compounding disputes over the redevelopment of the area. A partial explanation may be the changes in the broader political economy that resulted in the bankruptcy of the developer involved in the Moore Street redevelopment project. In 2008, Ireland experienced a triple crisis – financial, economic, and banking – that resulted in the collapse of the property sector, the near-collapse of the banking system and the need for a state bailout from the IMF. As part of the government attempt to address the problems in the banks after the financial crisis, the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) was set up as a 'bad bank' or asset resolution initiative (Moore-Cherry, 2016). Effectively, this state institution became one of the biggest real-estate agents in the city, holding vast swathes of development land and property across the city as security for loans that it now controlled. Similar to the 'crisis' that was the 1916 Rising, the more recent crisis transformed the role of the state in relation to the planning and development of the city. One of NAMA's debtors was Joe O'Reilly (Chartered Land), the proponent of the Moore Street retail redevelopment. Technically,

the state held the contentious buildings and sites as security for bad loans and theoretically could have forced their sale. As the centenary of the 1916 Rising approached, campaigners argued that the state should take ownership of what had already been designated a national monument. This heightened tensions between those who supported the reconstruction of what had over many decades become a disinvested area and those arguing to prevent the destruction of the heritage and historic value of Moore Street. In April 2015, under significant pressure to prove its 'nationalist' credentials, the government purchased numbers 14-17 Moore Street (the national monument) from NAMA and commissioned the Office of Public Works to begin renovations. In Autumn 2015, NAMA sold the remainder of the redevelopment site to UK and German real estate firms Hammerson and Allianz.

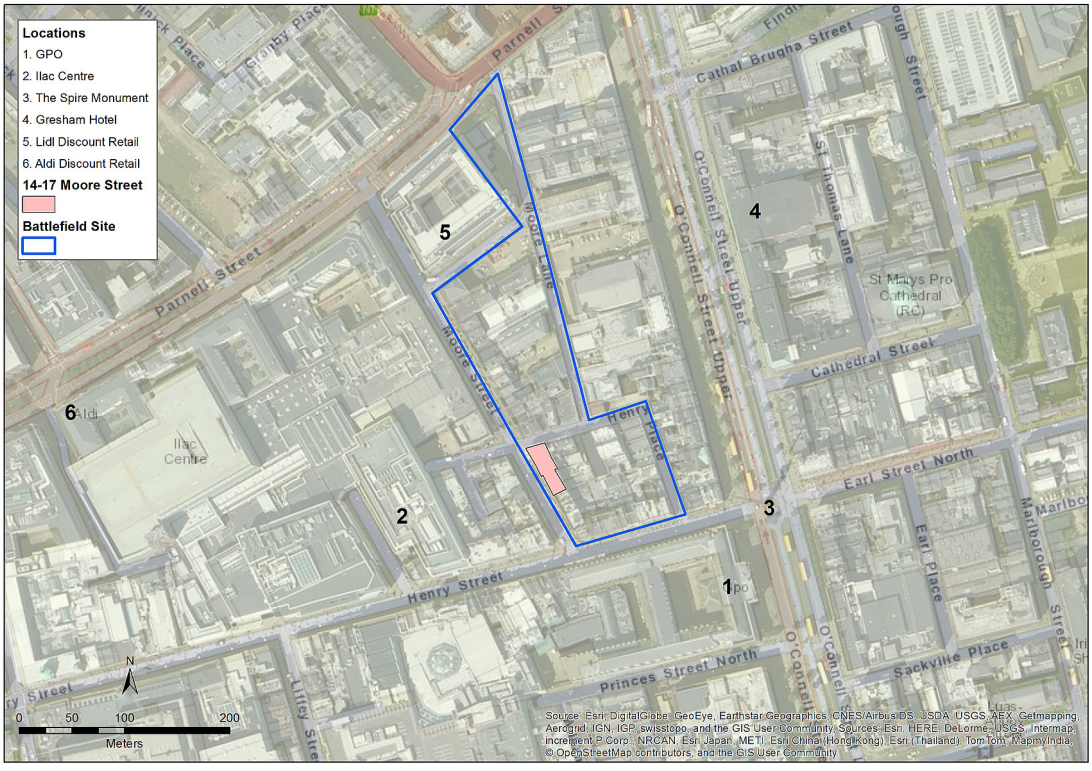
However, in early 2015 and as part of a broader strategy to rebrand and regenerate the city markets as a whole, Dublin City Council progressed plans to redesign the Moore Street market. While the new market was to include a new layout, bollards to demarcate trading areas and prevent 'sprawling', a new mandatory code of practice for traders, increased fees, and stringent controls to prevent 'anti-social behaviour' and 'black-market sales', the local authority was conspicuously absent from – or silent in – the debates surrounding the broader redevelopment of the street, raging between the developer, central government and heritage campaigners. Dublin City Council's ambitions for the city markets were admirable, but within such a politically charged environment they were unlikely to be realised. Unlike in the immediate aftermath of the 1916 Rising when much of the urgency to redevelop was to protect small businesses, the more recent story is one of repeated delays and timelags, which have jeopardised the already precarious livelihoods of the market traders. Many of them interpreted Dublin City Council's overall market strategy as an attempt to design them out of the street within the context of the imminent construction of a new large shopping complex. While much media interest focused on the street in the lead-up to the centenary of the Rising, little attention was given to the plight of the traders or their place and voice in ongoing debates about the future.

Whose 'Voice'? Whose City?

Moore Street and its environs have historically been a contested and marginalised part of the city but, as the discussion has illustrated, a more intense, complex and multi-layered struggle over the past, present and future of the district has been continuing for over a decade. Just as attempts to reconstruct O'Connell Street immediately after the 1916 Rising aimed to communicate a particular message about the political stability of the city, contemporary attempts both to redevelop Moore Street and to prevent destruction are equally politically charged. The contestation of Moore Street has reignited old political rivalries and illustrated their continued resonance in contemporary Ireland; with the exception of Fine Gael, all political parties have been publically pro-preservation. The original Save 16 Moore Street group was firmly aligned with the Fianna Fáil political party and bodies like *An Taisce* (national trust), while the Relatives' Association, which

has demanded a much greater concession in terms of the 'heritage' of the street, aligned itself with the Sinn Féin party. The lack of action by Fine Gael since it entered government in 2011 – arguably less 'nationalist' in its political orientation than other parties – fuelled dramatic and highly publicised struggles ultimately ending in a High Court case in March 2016. Campaigners argued, based on historic significance, for the designation of a large part of Moore Street and its environs as a 'battlefield site' (Figure 1). The judge ruled in their favour but given the wider potential implications for planning and development law in the country, the government appealed this ruling in June 2016. The case is scheduled to be heard in December 2017 and, until then, no progress in terms of historic preservation, market upgrading or commercial redevelopment can be made.

Figure 1: *Location map of Moore Street and 'battlefield site'*



While it has its unique challenges in terms of historico-political positioning, Moore Street today is, like many traditional marketplaces in both the Global North and Global South, in limbo. Far more than simply places for commodity exchange, these markets promote socio-economic inclusivity and the sustainable development of cities. As both state and private sector actors promote urban redevelopment and gentrification agendas – legitimised by powerful narratives

that problematise markets – these spaces in the city and the traders who depend on them face an increasingly uncertain future (Gonzalez and Waley, 2013). Our documentary analysis and interviews with some traders and shopkeepers show that repeatedly just as some form of redevelopment is about to begin, a discourse of decline, dereliction and illegality emerges very vocally in political and media circles, justifying the need for revanchist interventions (Smith, 1996). This attempt to 'squeeze the market' has, it could be argued, been given a new tool in the form of the heritage campaign; in all the recent debates around Moore Street's historical significance and future development, the voice of the market traders and their everyday histories and geographies has been notably absent. As the quote from Kennerk (2012) at the beginning of this paper has stated, the power of the connection to 1916 now dwarfs every other discussion in relation to the future of the street.

Since the beginning of the heritage campaign, little effort has been made by the campaigners to secure the support of the traders. On the rare occasions when traders have been included, this has been tokenistic. For example, at a Sinn Féin rally outside Leinster House in January 2016, a female trader uttered a very short statement to the crowd (in contrast to the lengthy Sinn Féin speeches):

> *The poor generations ... We have to fully support to the protection of Moore Street historical buildings. All the traders want to save Moore Street for the future generations. The building and protection of the market. Save Moore Street!*

Similarly, traders have had little voice in debates about redevelopment. In theory, Heather Humphreys, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht at the time, spoke on behalf of the traders (as the public) but although directly impacted, they have neither been consulted nor represented in the planning appeals. While the leaders of 1916 proclaimed that they would guarantee 'equal rights and equal opportunities to all … citizens, and [their] resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all of the children of the nation equally', certain attempts to mark the centenary of the Rising have fostered exclusion and division, silencing those with most to lose through continued uncertainty over the future of the street. This points towards the need to examine more critically the socio-spatial impacts of 'commemoration' in contemporary cities but also highlights the need for more informed and effective public policy-making that embraces the city as both socio-cultural and physical entity.

III 1916 then and now: reflections on the spatiality of the Rising's urban legacies

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The months prior to the Easter 2016 commemoration of the 1916 Rising were marked by a plethora of comment on the legacy of the insurrection. This discourse was dominated by the political legacy – the impact of the Rising on constitutionalism, political violence and the ultimate aims of Irish independence. By contrast, there was scant focus on the material impact of the Rising on Dublin and its citizens. How was the immediate legacy of large-scale destruction addressed and to what effect? What impact did this have on urban planning? Should the post-Rising development of Dublin inform contemporaneous campaigns to preserve the heritage of the Rising in the shape of surviving buildings on Moore Street? Should the government be held to account for its weak attempts to develop robust conservation guidelines that complement rather than frustrate urban development policy?

Concerns about destruction and the shaping of the urban environment, so evident in 1916, manifested themselves in a very different way a century later. In the immediate aftermath of the Rising, many buildings were entirely or partially destroyed, congregational spaces in the city such as the General Post Office and Clery's Department Store were badly damaged, and livelihoods were jeopardised as many workplaces and tools of work were damaged or looted. The most pressing concern a century ago was restitution to repair the damage and erase the material and visual legacy of the Rising so that the O'Connell Street area could be reopened for business as swiftly as possible. A campaign to this end transcended all political divisions as the British government underwrote the property losses occasioned by the Rising. In 2016, 'destruction' is still an important motif as heritage campaigners vigorously oppose redevelopment plans for the greater O'Connell Street area – including Moore Street, Moore Lane, and Henry Lane – lest they imperil buildings that they claim are central to the history and commemoration of the 1916 Rising. These campaigns operate in a politically fragmented context. The role of government – so straight forward in 1916 at a central and local level – is more complex today. There is no clear blueprint for what the future of this part of the city should be. The governmental response has been fitful and reactive as various interest groups vie with one another to have their voices and positions privileged. Even the production of a Moore Street Battlefield Site Plan in September 2016 by the Lord Mayor's Forum on Moore Street has no standing until the legal appeal against the battlefield designation is heard in December 2017. The shifting allegiances between and priorities of, different urban actors is one of the key reasons why urban governance is so complex and explains the relative stasis that characterises Moore Street today, when compared with the immediate aftermath of 1916 or indeed the post-Civil War 1920s.

In an uneasy consensus in 1916, the triumvirate of British government, Dublin business community and Dublin Corporation shaped redevelopment in the general vicinity of O'Connell Street but not as equals. The government was the dominant player as it decided on the scale of compensation; the business community had little choice but to accept the terms offered which were on the same basis as insurance. The weakest position was occupied by Dublin Corporation. Although it secured a loan on favourable terms (a commendable achievement in the middle of the First World War), it was largely unable to shape the provisions of the Dublin Reconstruction (Emergency Provisions) Act which reflected the priorities of a business community generally opposed to town planning regulations. Plans for a more uniform redevelopment of the main thoroughfare foundered due to legal difficulties and commercial pressures. Its town planning powers were modest and could be circumvented by property owners if they were so minded.

In the debates about the future of the O'Connell Street and Moore Street areas a century later, the most vocal stakeholders have been the developers, campaigners and central government. While Dublin City Council plays a role in providing the planning framework for the area, other agents have become the key protagonists in the ongoing and contentious disputes around how best to shape the future of this part of the city. Considerations beyond normal planning and development guidelines and policies have become paramount in determining the future shape and pace of development in this district. For example, the decision by the Minister to appeal a court judgment designating Moore Street and the surrounding laneways as a 'battlefield site' that requires protection under the National Monuments Act has been taken because of the potential implications for planning and development at a national level. Some observers maintain that the government's appeal is designed to protect the interests of developers and business in the area. If a court ruling limited the freedom of action of the state, this would send out the 'wrong' signal to international investors. As an area that has struggled with issues of disinvestment for many decades, there may be some merit to this argument.

Whatever the relationship between government, business and heritage campaigners, the extent to which traders have been excluded from the debate about the future of the area is clearly evident. This contrasts sharply with the concern exhibited by the British government and the Dublin business community for the 'small man' in 1916 and the negative impact of the Rising on ordinary livelihoods. Much of the compensation paid by PLIC related to items belonging to those employed in the areas affected by the destruction. Without compensation, many of them – domestic servants and tradesmen, for example – would not have been able to afford to buy a new uniform or tools and acquire a new job. While there has been considerable media attention and debate around the future of Moore Street today, consideration of the livelihoods of traditional traders and new migrant entrepreneurs on Moore Street has been conspicuously lacking. Their position has become increasingly precarious as disinvestment, lack of clarity on development plans and the manifold delays to the redevelopment process

have created continued uncertainty and marginalisation, leading many of them to believe that change of any kind is preferable to continued indecision. The recent appeal by government against the High Court judgment in relation to the 'battlefield site' will only prolong this vacillation. One long-term trader on the street captured the essence of the predicament: 'the market will probably be dead … Unless something is done. Honest to God, unless there's something done … We're not even coming into it. It's all about this building and everything else. They don't even know what they're arguing over. It's just one group trying to get at another group' (Interview with market trader, 26 August 2016).

The present Moore Street saga focuses attention on how the past is contested in the contemporary city and how the goals of heritage and future development should be balanced. Moore Street represents the significant complexities that underpin contemporary urban transformations and their governance, yet it is not the first time that this challenge has arisen in Dublin or Ireland. Previous disputes about appropriate protection for Wood Quay (an area of significant Viking heritage), Carrickmines Castle, or the Hill of Tara which was threatened by the proposed route of the M3 motorway, serve to highlight the weaknesses of Irish planning law and the need to clarify the relationship between heritage and economic development, as has taken place in other jurisdictions such as the UK. Ultimately, this is not just about the legacy of 1916, but about how society balances the protection of heritage with the need for future development. Arguably, it has been government inaction that has produced this 'limbo-land' for traders, campaigners, developers and government itself. On one hand, at a local government level, there has been repeated revision of plans for Moore Street with the result that none have been implemented properly. On the other, central government has failed to engage meaningfully with the complex issues around the legacies of 1916 as they emerged in Moore Street. One wonders if the Save Moore Street campaign would have transpired had the government seized the initiative in 2006 at the time of the 90th anniversary by opening a museum dedicated to the Rising in the GPO or in another appropriate space.

The High Court's ruling has generated significant challenges for current redevelopment plans in the area. Irrespective of the outcome of the appeal, urban planning and development in Dublin has been judicialised. Legal argument is determining the future of the city. A battlefield site has been designated of an area that, ironically in 1916, contemporaries rushed to erase from the cityscape in a bid to return to normal life and trading conditions. A more glaring irony (or perhaps absurdity) is the *exclusion* of the GPO. The physical privileging of particular spaces of the city as the 1916 Battlefield Site is a political action because boundaries are social constructions and 'boundary delineation is a process embedded within power relations that simultaneously silence particular interests and highlights others' (Moore-Cherry *et al.,* 2015, p 2143). In the context of the Easter Rising, it could reasonably be argued that the GPO, Four Courts and other locations within the city are far more integral to the 'battlefield of 1916'. The notion of designating *one particular* battlefield site, or more accurately one portion of one action site,

has raised apprehension not just for those concerned about its wider implications for planning law, but also for broader understandings of the impact of the 1916 Rising and other pre-1916 historic battles within the city. The designation is also questionable given the evidence of the spatiality of the 1916 Rising. Figure 2 compares the distribution of buildings requiring full reconstruction after the Rising (a proxy for the area which saw the most intense artillery fire by the British army as it quelled the Rising), with the court-designated 1916 Battlefield Site. There are clear discrepancies between the arena in which the most significant action took place and that which has been legally designated. While numbers 14-17 Moore Street are 'authentic', in that they have survived in their current form since 1916, there has been limited discussion of the extent to which most of the designated battlefield site has survived or subsequently been rebuilt.

Figure 2: *'Battlefield site' contextualised with the areas of most significant military action (represented by buildings requiring full reconstruction after the Rising)*

Conclusion

This commentary has been ambitious in attempting to chart some of the multiple urban legacies of the Easter 1916 Rising. The complementary perspectives of geography and history facilitate the proper contextualisation of those legacies. They have allowed us to highlight the parallels and discontinuities in terms of

urban politics and planning as well as destruction and reconstruction in the city. The story of Moore Street highlights the importance of considering the city both as physical and lived space; while much energy has been expended on preventing the destruction of buildings and reconstructing the memory of 1916 (the distant past), the destruction being caused to livelihoods rooted in the more recent past has gone virtually unnoticed. The inter-disciplinary approach taken in this reflective commentary has also opened up fruitful grounds for new research, questioning the assumptions upon which arguments are made and decisions taken. Our discussion of Figure 2 highlights the importance of an evidence-based approach to policy-making for the future of the city, and the importance of properly informed geographical and historical expertise in these debates. This is fundamental if a coherent strategy is to be devised to preserve the broader legacies of the Easter Rising and other major events in the urban history of Dublin. Temporality is crucial to understanding the evolution of spaces, but the urban must be understood 'not as a singular abstract temporality but as the site where multiple temporalities collide' (Crang, 2001, pp 189-90). These temporalities are productive in their capacity, with varying degrees of success and impact on different urban actors.

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