



Moving Market Places

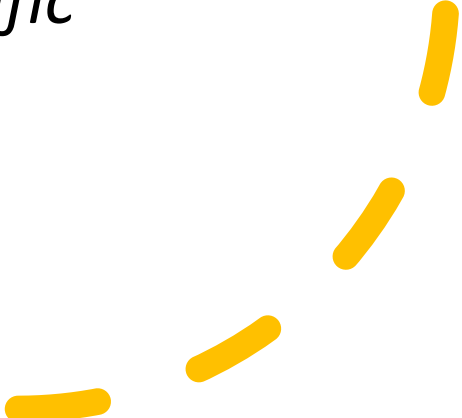
The Moving MarketPlaces (MMP) project investigates the role of ambulant traders in the everyday production of inclusive public spaces in Europe.



Markets as inclusive spaces

- This project moves away from previous research that has predominantly concentrated on how marketplaces are bodily experienced and consumed.
- Instead, MMP focuses on the diverse ways the inclusive character of marketplaces are actively socially produced. Therefore, we primarily focus on the actors that make markets work: the traders, who, through their mobility practices, help to transform marketplaces into inclusive public spaces by brokering everyday interactions.

Research questions

- **Place** | *What is the role of traders in the production of public spaces, now and in the past?*
 - **Mobility** | *How do traders navigate different social, cultural and economic dynamics across periodic marketplaces?*
 - **Institutional** | *Which (in)formal institutional arrangements affect the traders' settlement as well as mobility between specific marketplaces?*
- 

The Moving MarketPlaces (MMP) project investigates the role of ambulant merchants in the everyday production of inclusive public spaces in Europe.

In recent years, markets have been shown to be flexible spatial-temporal organisations that facilitate a spontaneous synergy between people of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. They turn into “cosmopolitan canopies” where diverse people feel they have an equal right to be. Hence, marketplaces reflect the notions of “superdiversity” and are considered prototypical public spaces.



Enacting Skills

- *Entry to the market*
- Traders find their way into the markets through many routes. The widely held assumption that traders are low-skilled people who end up in markets through lack of alternative options does not reflect the wide diversity of backgrounds of the traders. Some take over their parents' market stall having learnt how to run the stall since childhood, others decide to trade on a market for greater freedom and to be their own boss, and others because of changed life circumstances, such as redundancy. Some learn the skills on the job, and yet others come with a diversity of skills acquired elsewhere.

*Mediating
Bureaucracies
and selecting
commodities.*

- The choices market traders make about where to trade are embedded in a complex set of institutional and employment relations. Rather than just setting up their own stall where they prefer, traders on some markets have to convince the market manager that their business is viable, well organised and does not interfere with the business of long-term traders.
- They also have to select commodities that will sell. Know how to find them.
- Display them attractively.



La Boqueria



Constructing the market stall

- Markets consist of material objects as well as being spaces of commerce, exchange and sociality. They have an infrastructural presence in the city, whether the market occupies the space of a street, a square or an indoor covered building.
- While the materiality of market spaces is often overlooked in the focus on community building and inclusion the making of the stall and the presentation of the goods are central skills for traders. Just like the skills needed for entering markets and establishing oneself as a trader, these skills are subtle in the sense that they are not easily identifiable as one walks through a market.
- However, for the traders the ways in which they organise the making of their stall, present their goods and make transactions quick and easy both for themselves and their customers, can shape their success. Thus, traders need skills in setting up the site from which they trade.

Poultry stall



Community building and social inclusion

- Market traders in recent years have been considered as important social actors who bind communities together and markets have been argued to significant as sites of social interaction and encounter- particularly for more marginalised members of the community and as sites of community building and engagement
- The importance of social skills, often built on years of establishing trust, were evidenced also in the markets of this study, though we suggest, more explicitly attached also to the success of their business. Some traders are aware that their ability to chat to people, remember their families and ask after them, help people out, and entertain them with banter, also enhances their success as a market trader.

Walthamstow market



Vic market



Policy contributions

MMP adds a crucial new layer to our understanding of European public spaces by scrutinising how marketplaces are actively (re-) produced on the everyday level.

Through the incorporation of key actors on national and transnational levels, we will translate our findings to concrete policies for city planners, market managers, wardens and other place-makers on how we can promote more inclusive societies in Europe through supporting convivial social infrastructures.

