

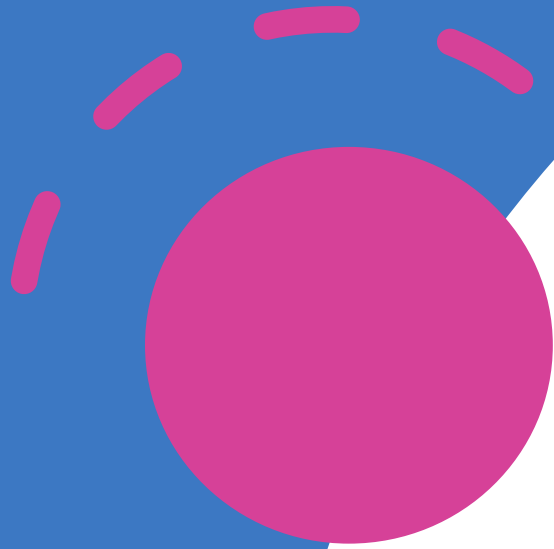


# The Importance of Visions for Revitalising Markets

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Moving Market Places project.



- The Moving MarketPlaces (MMP) project investigates the role of ambulant traders in the everyday production of inclusive public spaces in Europe.
  - <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/moving-marketplaces>
    - Funded by HERA.

## How cities are envisioned has effects

they shape the social and spatial outcomes of how cities are produced, maintained, reproduced and lived.

Urban imaginaries underpin urban planning, urban policy, urban investment and other such interventions which mould the cities we live in and enable different versions of a city's future.

Despite clear evidence of the different social and economic benefits of markets, powerful imaginaries of the different functions that markets perform have played a key role in their endurance and revitalisation.

# How are markets imagined?

## *Markets as 'improving the community'*

In the news items on British markets, 'relations with local community' is a frequently recurring topic, addressed a total of 113 times in 60 of the 158 analysed items.

UK marketplaces are repeatedly portrayed as central to 'the local community' and as important 'social hubs'.

This conception of markets has been supported by academic researchers who have provided empirical evidence reinforcing this image of markets as important community spaces

- In the local news, British street markets are frequently portrayed as having a positive impact on local economies and as playing an important role in saving the British high street.
- Following the early lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, reopening markets was considered vital to restoring local business and economies.
- Mary Portas set out her vision for the British high street:

'I want to put the heart back into the centre of our High Streets, re-imagined as destinations for socialising, culture, health, wellbeing, creativity and learning. Places that will develop and sustain new and existing markets and businesses.

*Markets as  
'saving the  
high street'*

## *Markets as promoters of localism and sustainability*



This idea is mostly connected to food markets and especially farmers' markets that have emerged as a response to the otherwise anonymous and geographically distant products offered by multinational supermarket chains.



This applies not just to privately organized farmers' markets but rather, but also public municipal markets who are adapting to these new demands and are emphasising "local foods" which reinforce notions of sustainability and supporting local producers.

*Markets as  
gastronomic hubs  
and boosters of  
tourism*



The idea of markets as gastronomic hubs includes the recent trend of transforming traditional stalls into bars and restaurants that offer regional dishes alongside culinary experiments

as well as adding gourmet shops that offer products equipped with labels of protected designations of origin which, again, are associated with the local area.

Promoted in local tourist information





## In summary - market Visions

- Our point is not that these imaginations and visions of markets are not true.
- Rather that they have been important vehicles for encouraging the investment in, and support of, markets by local councils and other market organisations.