

Marketplaces

Movements, Representations and Practices

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Chapter 1

Introduction

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1 Introduction

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Introduction

This edited book investigates everyday marketplaces as important socio-economic spaces through a mobility lens. On the one hand, markets are often seen as quintessential public *places*, where people of different social, economic and cultural backgrounds feel welcome and can interact (Morales, 2009; Watson, 2009; Janssens & Sezer, 2013a). On the other hand, markets are perhaps the most *mobile*, dynamic, temporal and translocal of all public spaces (Seale, 2016; Schappo & Van Melik, 2017; Breines et al., 2021), constructed and deconstructed each operating day and consisting of a wide array of people, goods and ideas. Hence, markets provide a unique opportunity to study the relation between place and mobility.

In social sciences, the mobility perspective views social and cultural changes not as static processes but as various states of spatial and temporal transformations produced by the movement of human and non-humans, including things, objects, ideas and information (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007; Adey, 2017). In a similar vein, this book presents empirically evidenced research which studies marketplaces as dynamic and open entities rather than primarily as bounded places where economic transactions occur and encounters take place (Watson, 2009; Hiebert et al., 2015). It brings together various scholarly and practice-based works on marketplaces, traders, visitors, regularity bodies, designers and planners from a wide geographical distribution, including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Bulgaria, Turkey, Lebanon, Peru, Brazil, Vietnam and South Africa.

Such a relational approach is not new in market research; previous studies on markets, including earlier Routledge books, have also focused on markets as nodes of flows (e.g. Seale, 2016; González, 2018). However, what is new in this book is that we make this relational perspective more explicit by combining market studies with conceptual starting points from mobilities studies. Building upon the work of Tim Cresswell (2010), among others, we look at movements, representations and practices on/of the markets to illustrate that their importance often stretches beyond their physical confines (Schappo & Van Melik, 2017).

Our purpose in this collection of work is threefold. First, with increasing attention on marketplaces in research, practice and policy arenas, we believe

that a mobility perspective can bring a renewed approach to marketplace studies. Second, we aim to stimulate better communication between marketplace researchers and practitioners from various disciplines, such as urban geography, sociology, anthropology, urban design and planning and policy-making. A mobility perspective can serve as a helpful framework that ties together and generates dialogue between these various fields of marketplace studies. Third, we aim to present that marketplace may potentially crosscut geographical and cultural boundaries, blurring the Global North and Global South divide as they are very often addressed in social science studies. The mobility perspective provides a useful framework to present common and distinctive features of marketplaces beyond their geographical contextualisation.

The following section conceptualises marketplaces and explains why and how they gained increasing attention from researchers and policymakers throughout history. The chapter then elaborates how a mobility perspective helps to extend this state-of-the-art and to foster increased multidisciplinary dialogue on marketplaces. After presenting the book's outline, the chapter ends with some reflections on the development of this edited volume during a worldwide pandemic.

Conceptualisations of marketplaces

Marketplaces have long attracted research attention due to their essential role as the heart of urban settlements. In the Greek agora, marketplaces were sites of daily improvisational performance (Sennett, 1998). The display of goods, fruits, flowers, contrasting colours and scents, together with the vendors' cheerful voices, served as a recognition space where social interactions were performed without any specific or scripted roles. This colourful landscape of the marketplace inspired Agnew's book – *Worlds Apart, The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought* (1986), in which he compares marketplaces to theatres, another spatial and cultural stage. Agnew argues that, unlike theatres, marketplaces break all kinds of social and physical limitations with their multi-valued, random and spatial relations. Accordingly, a marketplace functions as the threshold of exchange between different social worlds (Agnew, 1986).

Marketplaces were also generally seen as the primary driver of urban growth. Historically, the main source of city development was trade, and the marketplaces were at the core of these exchanges in which various goods were imported and exported (Jacobs, 1969; Stobart & Van Damme, 2016). The city centre of market towns was essentially devoted to the market, which was regularly settled on certain days (Kostof, 1999). The location of the marketplace was chosen in an easy access to the city's entry points and main trade roads. For example, marketplaces in 12th and 13th century England were mainly seen at the border between the villages. The marketplace was positioned as a neutral zone where people met regularly for commercial transactions (Kelley, 2016).

Marketplaces are also understood as a component of the cultural heritage, as they fundamentally link to the understanding of time, space, local identity, cultural practices and spirituality. A significant example of this is Nigeria's ethnic community, the Igbos, who see the world as a marketplace where individuals are

born to be traders and die to go back for the next cycle of reincarnation (Chukwuemeka et al., 2020). The Igbos believe that societies without trade or other forms of cultural and material exchanges are subject to conflict and contestation. The market days are also the basis for their calendar system in which a week consists of four days and seven weeks make a month. Even after adopting the Gregorian calendar system, market days still play a role in the Igbos' lives to decide farming periods, days for marriage ceremonies and for burial rites. The Igbos are still prominent merchant communities in Nigeria (Chukwuemeka et al., 2020).

Despite the significant importance of marketplaces as the core of economic and socio-cultural transactions in the city, local authorities often tend to problematise them as unhygienic and unhealthy urban environments. Early examples of this situation were in the major European cities in the mid-19th century, where poverty, overpopulation and pollution were the main problems in inner-city areas. For example, in London, street markets were a part of the vivid urban scene in the 19th century supplying cheap food and products (Mayhew, 1985). However, they were unorganised and naturally growing (Kelley, 2016). The city authorities have viewed these markets as components of the city's degraded living conditions. They introduced structural spatial changes to address this problem, including removing street markets and developing new and enlarged indoor marketplaces. These new indoor markets functioned as an urban renewal tool as well, as their construction required the demolition of existing building blocks and re-organisation of streets (Hall, 1988). They were also strictly organised with new tax rules, price control, opening and closing times and reflecting lifestyles of the affluent groups through their characteristic architecture and improved hygienic conditions (Kelley, 2016).

Today, marketplaces are still seen as an urban renewal tool in many cities worldwide. The city authorities often characterise them as problem areas due to health, safety and traffic concerns and illegal practices and tend to re-organise and brand them following various urban development agendas (Van Eck, 2021). They have been closed down or/and relocated in places to make them suitable for the modernisation agenda of the city authorities, such as the Kigali market in Rwanda (Michelon, 2009). Marketplaces also facilitate urban rebranding and place-making practices, such as Quincy Market in Boston and South Street Seaport in New York City (Janssens & Sezer, 2013a). They have been seen as tools for the commodification of immigrant cultural economies, such as Vancouver's Chinatown Night Market (Pottie-Sherman, 2013) and Amsterdam's Dappermarkt (Janssens & Sezer, 2013b). They have also been part of gentrification processes in the inner-city areas subject to market pressures, as seen in Cusco's marketplaces in Peru (Seligman & Guevara, 2013) and Beijing's Silk Street Market (Lin Pang & Sterling, 2013).

Nevertheless, a steadily growing body of literature reminds us of what marketplaces can offer cities and their people. As flexible spatial-temporal organisations, marketplaces can facilitate a spontaneous synergy between people of different social-economic and cultural backgrounds (Morales, 2009; Watson, 2009; Sezer, 2020). They can give a sense of the city's life and 'soul' (Urbact Markets, 2015). Markets worldwide share certain commonalities, which makes

them familiar environments with similar routines and codes of conduct (Ünlü-Yücesoy, 2013). Along with relatively low entry barriers for traders, marketplaces are generally thought of as inclusive spaces, where diverse people feel they have an equal right to be (Morales, 2011; Hiebert et al., 2015; Nikšič & Sezer, 2017).

Recent studies have also shown that marketplaces can provide platforms for alternative consumption models of sharing and upcycling, reuse and recycling at non-monetary-based private and public sharing events. For example, Albinsson and Perera's (2012) research on 'Really Free Markets', initially organised by the Anarchist Movement, developed as a community movement including participants from wider groups and organisations.

And perhaps most importantly, the marketplace constitutes part of the minimal urban infrastructure required to meet basic human survival needs in many cities worldwide (Abwe, 2020). They function as the economic engine that connects rural farmers to urban traders and urban consumers, as an active part of the supply and demand chain as the basics of economics. They serve as grounds for job opportunities, livelihood sources, touristic attractions, education platforms for entrepreneurial skills and growth of wealth (Asante & Helbrecht, 2020). We, therefore, regard marketplaces as essential infrastructures which deserve wider recognition and deepened understanding, which this book aims to provide by applying a mobility perspective.

Marketplaces and mobility perspective

Although the plethora of research described earlier offers excellent accounts of the importance of marketplaces, we believe most of these studies so far have been relatively 'place-based' by focusing on what happens within the physical confines of the market: the encounters, transactions and activities occurring in the marketplace. Often, the market's design or the everyday interaction on the market is studied, showing how they are experienced and consumed, and function as meeting grounds supporting inclusive city life (e.g. Watson 2009; Polyák, 2014). An excellent example is De La Pradella's (2006) book entitled *Market Day in Provence*, in which she describes the social world of a weekly market. Another one is Marovelli's (2014) work on sensory perception of a Sicilian urban marketplace, which illustrates how certain smells and sounds at the market are allowed while others are not. Such place-based ethnographies approach markets as 'bounded containers of value' (Massey, 2001: 16): static, closed entities with clear boundaries in space and time, and their specific spatial design, organisational structure, economics and sociability.

While such studies greatly enhance our understanding of particular spaces, they provide little knowledge on their broader purpose beyond their physical and organisational boundaries or the relations between different public spaces. Conversely, Schappo and Van Melik (2017) show that the integrative potentiality of markets reaches beyond their physical confines, bringing together municipalities, traders, local entrepreneurs and residents. In other words, a focus on marketplaces as 'bounded containers' leads to limited insights regarding the question of how these public spaces are created by the constant incoming and outgoing flows

of people, goods and ideas. Following Van Melik and Spierings (2020), this book, therefore, aims to go beyond ‘place-based’ studies and applies a more ‘process-oriented’ or ‘processual’ investigation that approaches markets as dynamic, fluid and open entities. As such, we aim to further extend our understandings of marketplaces by studying not just what they are but also how they *come into being*.

To develop such a processual understanding of public space, we draw for inspiration on the so-called new mobilities paradigm or mobility turn (Sheller & Urry, 2006), which resulted in a large and still growing number of studies focusing on the flows and movement of people, goods and ideas in social sciences (e.g. Adey, 2006, 2017; Urry, 2007; Jensen, 2009; Cresswell, 2010, 2011; Breines et al., 2021). While this mobility perspective is very common in certain fields of urban research, such as migration studies, it is less conventional in public space research in general, and market research in particular (with some notable exceptions, such as Qiang, 2013). Only street vending studies (e.g. Etzold, 2014; Neethi et al., 2021) tend to have a strong focus on flows and movements, such as Endres and Leshkovich (2018) edited volume *Traders in Motion: Identities and Contestations in the Vietnamese Marketplace*. This book describes the dynamics of emplacement, mobility and boundary-making practices of Vietnamese street vendors. Although the editors claim that the findings transgress Vietnam and also offer insights into other rapidly shifting trade contexts elsewhere in the Global South, we argue that a mobility perspective is also valuable in other spatial contexts.

Such a process-oriented, mobility perspective resonates with the increasing body of literature in urban studies that uses a relational lens to understand urban phenomena. Though the terminology differs from practices and assemblages to interplay, constellations or throwntogetherness (e.g. Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2010), these studies share a common ground in looking at socio-material relations. Following this idea, it is not merely the (inter)actions of traders and consumers or the physical and legal structure of the market (i.e., design, regulation), but the interweaving of all these factors that determines how marketplaces function. As such, markets should quite literally be seen as intersections (Hiebert et al., 2015) where people, products and policies temporarily cross paths.

Figure 1.1 clearly illustrates these two different approaches to studying marketplaces. Inspired by the work of anthropologist Tim Ingold, Breines et al. (2021, 9) set off a place-based, bounded version of the market on the left against a mobile perspective on marketplaces on the right, in which they are perceived as ‘knots’ of people, things, goods and ideas. Although the version of the left also consists of straight lines indicating the routes to the market, “the lines represent static movements and do not shape and transform the places but leave them untouched” (Breines et al., 2021: 10). In contrast, the market on the right only exists by merit of the mobilities of traders, customers, goods and stalls, without which there would not even have been a market. Mobility and public places thus not only exist simultaneously; mobilities produce places (Breines et al., 2021: 9).

To structure our argumentation, we draw on the work of human geographer Tim Cresswell in this edited volume. He defines the mobility perspective in social sciences as the exploration of “the movement of people, things, and ideas as at

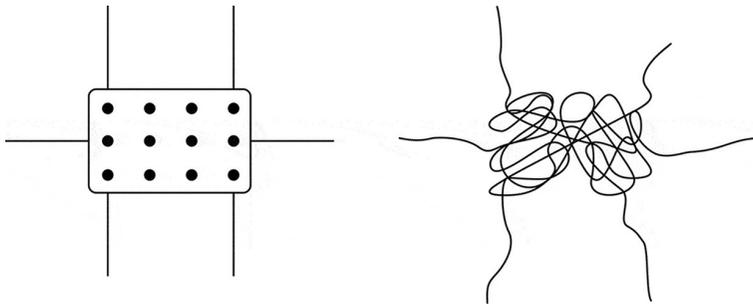


Figure 1.1 Two versions of a marketplace.

Source: Breines et al., 2021: 9.

the centre of *constellation* of power, the creation of identities and the micro geographies of everyday life” (Cresswell, 2011: 551). Following Walter Benjamin, Cresswell (2010: 18) uses the notion of ‘constellations’ to describe how mobility can be understood as a combination of (1) particular patterns of physical *movement*, (2) *representations* of movement, and (3) *practices* of movement, which only make sense together. In this edited book, we use a similar framework to study marketplaces.

According to Cresswell (2010: 19), *patterns of movement* are about getting from one place to another; this physical movement is “the raw material of the production of mobility. People move, things move, ideas move”. When applied to marketplaces, this physical movement is about their mobile character, notably of street markets and street vending practices. Due to their ambulant nature, many markets move from one place to another. Being in a different locality each day, the traders have to cope with different institutional arrangements, markets’ composition, layout and consumers. Often, the market does not move as a whole, but as separate entities. Such changes require flexibility from the traders, as well as navigational skills. However, not only traders move; markets are inherently spaces of flows – also of goods and ideas. They are a temporary get-together, which turns physical spaces in the city into public spaces – if only for the duration of market hours, after which they are disentangled again.

However, according to Cresswell, understanding physical movement is only one aspect of mobility: “But this says next to nothing about what these mobilities are made to mean or how they are practiced” (2010: 19). He therefore also focuses on different meanings – or *representations* – attributed to movement. Representations touch upon dominant narratives about the meaning and value of markets, also known as ‘place frames’ (Martin, 2003). While in some cases, markets are perceived as ‘relics of the past’ on the verge of distinction, there are also dominant discourses that claim that markets still (and increasingly so) have important socio-economic values in providing among others income, access to fresh food, conviviality and care, as outlined previously. Such places frames are not neutral; they are constructed, contested and negotiated. Van Eck (2021), for example, illustrates how the frame of what constitutes a ‘good quality market’ in Amsterdam is very much informed by

dominant racialised ideas, which in turn influence the ways market managers, visitors and traders interact with each other.

Lastly, *practices* are everyday activities and how these are experienced and embodied. Cresswell (2010) mentions walking and driving as mobility practices, which are enacted and experienced through the body. In a similar vein, we focus on the different doings being performed at marketplaces—from planners and designers working on mitigating tensions to (ethnic) entrepreneurs who act as brokers through their bridging role between cultures and classes. Some of these practices are very embodied: the physical labour of trading, for example, requires many skills and strength.

Applying a mobility perspective to study marketplaces means that we think of them as entanglements of movement, representation and practice. Cresswell (2010) uses the example of driving to illustrate the value of such a ‘constellation’ or entanglement: to understand driving, one should not only look at the physical movement of getting from one place to another by car but also appreciate that this is imbued with certain narratives or values (freedom, polluting) and felt by the body (liberating, tiring, nerve reeking). Cresswell (2010: 20) concludes, “Similar sets of observations could be made about all forms of mobility: they have a physical reality, they are encoded culturally and socially, and they are experienced through practice”. In a similar vein, this book uses these three themes to enhance our understanding of marketplaces as dynamic, networked and multi-layered spaces.

Outline of the book

This volume contains 14 chapters, including this introductory chapter, which sets the ground for the argument of this book, and an afterword written by Sara González. The chapters all apply a mobility perspective to investigate marketplaces in different parts of the world. While some chapters explicitly focus on movement, others address certain dominant representations of markets, and almost all discuss certain (trading, policy) practices in one way or another. As Cresswell (2010: 19) also acknowledges, these three elements are difficult to disentangle, as they are bound up with one another. Therefore, we decided not to divide this book into clearly separated parts but to cluster chapters with similar foci.

Before we briefly introduce the chapters, it is necessary to note that we do not predefine marketplaces. Endres and Leshkovich (2018: 2) indicate that “the market is not a singular entity”. Due to their diverse modalities, markets come in many different types and sizes. Our call for contributions (see the following) attracted scholars studying a wide range of places and activities, from street vending in Vietnam (Chapter 2) and India (Chapter 3); to indoor or covered markets with permanent infrastructures in Spain (Chapter 6), Brazil (Chapter 9) and Peru (Chapter 10); day-markets in Turkey (Chapter 4) and the UK (Chapter 11); and open-air farmer markets in Switzerland (Chapter 12). We appreciated the diversity of markets discussed in these contributions, as they show us that markets are indeed not singular—but are very different in time and space. If anything, we can only say what markets are *not*: they are *not* just bounded spatial locations.

We invited our contributors to empirically investigate not just the ‘here-and-now’ of their cases (for example, focusing on their use or design) but also the ‘there-and-then’, making links to other places or times. This approach resulted in researchers employing ‘go-along’ methods, among others, acknowledging the flexible and itinerant nature of trading, such as following research participants during their trading activities (Chapters 2 and 3). Other contributors have not followed traders but traced back where market legislation or market goods come from (Chapters 12 and 13). These chapters show how markets are often portrayed as local entities, yet are part and parcel of global networks of policies and goods. Another group of contributors has taken the temporal dynamics of markets into account, showing the changing rhythms of the market during the day or even the decade (Chapters 3, 4 and 8). Whatever their specific methodology, these contributions all acknowledge markets as unbounded, fluid entities.

Chapter 2 by Celia Zuberec and Sarah Turner focuses on vending strategies and mobility patterns of street vendors in Hanoi, Vietnam. Drawing on interviews with 35 migrant traders, including ‘walking (or riding) while talking interviews’, they show how mobility is differentially accessed, experienced and embodied. The traders draw on a range of dynamic strategies and everyday practices to reach potential customers while avoiding state sanctions simultaneously. Vendors exactly know where and when (not) to trade, and inform each other through social networks. Different narrative maps illustrate that being on the move—while perhaps suggesting flexibility and irregularity—can nevertheless result in dominant routes and rhythms.

In Chapter 3, Kiran Keswani uses the notion of rhythmanalysis, drawing on the work of philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre. Her study of Bhadra Plaza in Ahmedabad in India portrays the (im)mobility patterns of push-cart vendors selling chai tea and their ‘runners’ delivering the kettles and cups to customers. Biological and social rhythms influence the movement of the chai runners; thirst and work breaks result in peaks of flows of people (runners) and goods (tea). Hence, the chapter illustrates the spatial and temporal relation between social interaction, time and movement in the marketplace.

In a similar vein, Nihan Oya Memlük-Çobanoğlu and Bilge Beril Kapusuz-Balcı visualise a day in the Esat Marketplace in Ankara (Turkey) in Chapter 4. In their spectral analysis, the authors show that there is a variety of rhythms and actors/actants producing them, including regular patterns (*eurythmia*), as well as moments of contingent rhythms (*arrhythmia*). Taking Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis as a starting point, they argue that we should not just study marketplaces as important urban spaces but also as timespaces or rhythmic fields.

Noxolo Ndaba and Karina Landman study the adaptive capacity of street traders in one of South Africa’s largest transport hubs, Warwick Junction in eThekweni Municipality. Their findings in Chapter 5 illustrate how traders are resilient in response to changes like urban renewal projects and the COVID-19 pandemic. This is demonstrated in practices such as self-organisation and collaboration, and being mobile in search of the best (legal) trading location.

Urban renewal is a central theme in many chapters. The role of markets in such a renewal process can be various. Maria Lindmäe and Marco Madella focus

in Chapter 6 on La Boqueria in Barcelona (Spain), which is often represented as the ‘best’ or ‘most important’ market in the world, a success story of market management and urban restructuring triggering policy tourism and international knowledge exchange. However, COVID-19 has illustrated how dependent the market has become on tourists and more affluent consumers seeking an interesting food experience rather than being a neighbourhood market offering a large variety of products with accessible prices. The current aim is to bring back the ‘traditional’ market. Still, public and private interests clash as the public administration, market managers and stallholders have different interpretations of what and for whom the market should be.

In other contexts, more negative representations of the market prevail. In Chapter 7, Christine Mady studies the Souq Al Ahad in Beirut, Lebanon. She shows how the market is in constant, incremental transformation and that different (political) stakeholders depict it as a place of disgrace and destitution, arguing for its relocation. Mady employs the concepts of liminality and fluidity to explain the market’s role amidst these contestations and changes.

Similarly, Nikola A. Venkov interrogates in Chapter 8 what neoliberal restructuring looks like at two open-air markets in the post-socialist context of Sofia, Bulgaria. He uses the notion of socio-spatial sorting to describe how urban policy changes, such as the introduction of a new auction system stimulating intense intra-marketplace competition, resulted in a process of sorting both traders and buyers: “Poorer citizens were ‘sorted towards’ the Women’s Market, while food growers were ‘sorted out’ of marketplaces.”

Such patterns of contestation and competition indeed raise questions regarding who the market is for and to what extent it serves as a *just* place. In Chapter 9, Patrícia Schappo investigates the ongoing transfer of responsibility for market management away from the public to the private sector at four public markets in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She evaluates a recent tendering process by drawing upon Fainstein’s justice triad of democracy, equity and diversity. Rather than labelling such shifting responsibilities as neoliberal strategies, she concludes that markets are infrastructures where entrepreneurial *and* social justice aims can coexist.

All these contributions touch upon certain dominant narratives that exist about the meaning and value of markets. Ana María Huaita Alfaro discusses in Chapter 10 public expressions regarding marketplaces in Lima, Peru. In contrast to other (Latin American) cities, public markets here still play an essential role in food provision, growing in number and outperforming supermarkets. However, the chapter shows that the appreciation of these markets beyond their function as commercial spaces is limited. Markets are generally represented as neglected, outdated and non-modern, which restricts their potential function as common ground for commingling.

Chapter 11 by Sophie Watson and Markus Breines discusses another dominant representation regarding the relationship between traders’ mobility and their attachment to place. In both classic and contemporary urban sociology, the hypothesis generally is that urban life differs distinctly from rural, with city spaces—including marketplaces—being more fluid, less fixed and with weaker social ties compared to more rural spaces. However, the authors’ comparison of

a London market and a rural one in the south of England shows that such pre-conceptions are misconceiving. Instead, rural traders appear less attached to the market they were working in and had a weaker sense of community, mostly due to their different mobility patterns.

Markets are also often depicted in dominant public imaginations as ‘local’ sites. For example, the ‘Love Your Local Market’ campaign, which is annually organised in 24 different countries, serves to promote the idea of the proximity of the markets in terms of location, personal contact with traders and with products (NABMA, 2021). The last two contributions put this locality of the market in perspective. Joanna Menet and Janine Dahinden illustrate in Chapter 12 how traders at Swiss food markets consciously produce the image that both their products and themselves are from close proximity. Even if this is not the case, when clearly non-Swiss products are sold, these are represented as authentic local products from elsewhere. Hence, they conclude that markets are local only insofar as traders apply many strategies to bind their clients in proximity – but their locality is also conditioned by their embeddedness in a global identity politics where mobility, transnationality and nationalism play a crucial role in the success of markets.

Emil van Eck, Rianne van Melik and Joris Schapendonk discuss in Chapter 13 how a European Union law from 2006 (the so-called Service Directive) has recently caused much concern among Dutch market traders. Their trading contracts can suddenly no longer be issued for an unlimited period but will become restricted in duration. Though this supposedly makes it easier for newcomers to enter the marketplace, the shorter contracts will also make it more difficult for traders to obtain bank credits and recoup their investment costs. The chapter shows that although most Dutch markets fall under the authority of municipal governments—and are hence ‘local’ affairs—the governance of marketplaces takes place on different spatial scales.

Routledge has a tradition of publishing titles on public space in general (Hou, 2010; Madanipour et al., 2014; Mehta & Palazzo, 2020) and (street) markets in particular (Evers & Seale, 2015; Seale, 2016; González, 2018). To pay tribute to these predecessors and indicate how the present edited volume builds upon this knowledge base, we invited the author of the latest Routledge book on marketplaces—Sara González—to write an afterword. In Chapter 14, she reflects upon the added value of using a mobility approach when studying marketplaces. The book closes with her call for an action research agenda that centres around marketplaces as essential urban spaces to foster more socially and environmentally just cities.

Development of this edited volume during COVID-19

This edited volume came into being after a broad call for chapters was launched in September 2019. Throughout various listservs and on social media, we invited researchers to submit contributions dealing with everyday marketplaces as dynamic and open entities with their institutional networks and constant flows of people, goods and ideas. Researchers were asked to link their contributions

to one of the three themes (movements, representations and practices). After a careful selection, we welcomed a wide range of chapters—discussing different types of markets, spatial contexts and methodologies. Authors come from all over the world and discuss marketplaces in both the Global North and South, among others in, Brazil, Peru, Vietnam, South Africa, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, India and Turkey.

In addition, the book contains contributions from many different disciplines, including the work of geographers, urban designers, sociologists, spatial planners and architects in various phases of their careers. As such, we feel the book generates multidisciplinary dialogues on markets, with the mobility perspective as a binding framework. Although it is a book on marketplaces, the contributors touch upon many themes relevant to other urban (public) spaces, such as urban transformation, ethnic diversity, social justice, place-making, translocality, institutional regulation and neoliberal urbanism.

It is important to note that full chapters were written in 2020 and 2021 amidst a global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 coronavirus. Though the virus is imperceptible, its impact has been very visible, perhaps most so in urban public spaces. In countries with very strict lockdowns, this resulted in empty streets and marketplaces, and spatial and temporal restrictions limiting the outdoor visits' frequency, duration and reach (Van Melik et al., 2021). In many regions of the world, marketplace-related interventions were ambiguous: while the dense, open and public character of markets were considered a major risk for contamination, they were also revalued for their significant role in the local food supply. Consequently, while some markets closed down completely, others were allowed to remain open under strict regulations and for only a limited number of (food) traders and customers (Van Eck et al., 2020).

Not only did the pandemic affect the object of investigation (i.e. marketplaces), but it also impacted our contributors' research activities. Some of the original fieldwork plans had to be adjusted; for example, Chapter 9 was initially planned to be a comparative study of marketplaces in Brazil and the United Kingdom, but this was impossible due to international travel restrictions. Fieldwork for Chapter 7 was not only impacted by COVID-19 but also limited by the devastating harbour explosion in Beirut that occurred in the same year. But also under less challenging spatial circumstances, all authors had to transition to homework and adjust to online teaching and research methods. We appreciate how everyone contributing to this edited volume has shown resilience and patience throughout the writing and editing process.

Notwithstanding these difficult circumstances, we do not feel this is primarily a book about markets in times of COVID-19, although some chapters do explicitly refer to the pandemic's effects (e.g. Chapters 6 and 10). First, one of our criteria was that fieldwork was more or less finished when we selected contributions at the beginning of 2020. The themes and methodologies of most chapters were therefore already well established before the pandemic emerged. Second, the pandemic certainly affected marketplaces, but in a way revealed nothing new. Many of the challenges discussed in this book, such as patterns of contestation and competition, were exacerbated or amplified rather than caused by

the pandemic (Van Melik et al., 2021). As such, the pandemic merely revealed pre-existing narratives, tensions and pressures in the marketplace.

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