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Placing regimes of mobilities beyond state-centred perspectives and international mobility: the case of marketplaces

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have scrutinized the state-centered and sedentarist foundations of social sciences that pitch ‘mobilities’ against ‘places’ by arguing that places and mobilities always co-constitute each other. Contributing to this debate, this article deploys the concept of ‘regimes of mobilities’ to study how mobilities are not only ‘placed’, but also entangled in, and shaped by, different power systems. By regimes of mobilities we understand all the mechanisms that differentiate mobilities into categories and hierarchies. This article argues that linking the concept of regimes of mobilities to the study of places can help illuminate how the ordering and differentiation of diverse forms of mobilities play out in the everyday realities of particular places. We empirically demonstrate this argument through the study of outdoor markets in three European countries: the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the Netherlands. We delineate different regimes of mobilities that together shape both access to, and the production of, markets. We conclude that the concept of regimes of mobilities helps to identify this intersection of multiple systems of rules, regulations and norms. Hence, the concepts allows one to direct attention systematically to the different power systems that affect the supposedly ‘mundane’ mobilities that constitute place and the skills required to navigate the related dynamics.

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1. Introduction

Our article contributes to this special issue by building on fundamental concerns regarding the state-centered and sedentarist principles of social sciences. We enter into dialogue with these critiques by studying *places* as temporal configurations of diverse *regimes of mobilities*. We specifically study outdoor retail markets, by approaching them through the prism of regimes of

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mobilities. This implies that we regard these markets as inherently mobile spaces where flows of people and goods are temporarily ‘thrown together’ (Massey 2005; Breines, Menet, and Schapendonk 2021; MMP 2022a). The paper builds on existing work in the realm of *regimes of mobilities* (e.g. Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Kloppenburg 2013) while drawing attention to two elements that have been neglected by this literature.

First, the notion of regimes is strongly linked to *state* or *supra-state* practices that filter and control people’s *international mobilities* such as border, refugee or migration regimes (e.g. De Genova 2017; Schapendonk et al. 2020). By contrast, we propose to use the term of regimes of mobilities to understand how the ordering and differentiation of *diverse forms* of mobilities, *beyond international ones*, work out in *everyday and seemingly mundane realities of particular places*. By regimes of mobilities we understand all the mechanisms that differentiate mobilities into categories and hierarchies. Regimes of mobilities comprise a multitude of actors—both state and *non-state*—and include regulations, representations, categorisations, and everyday practices that operate in different, yet interconnected, layers.

Second, the objective of this paper is to *place* regimes. As proposed by this special issue, we start from place as an entry point of analysis from where we identify the mechanisms that differentiate mobilities into categories and hierarchies, that is, regimes of mobilities. Places imbue the analysis of regimes of mobilities with locally embedded practices. These practices, which legitimize some mobilities and disqualify others, resonate (or not) with the production of mobility-related differences at local, national or supranational levels. This approach of placing regimes of mobilities not only equips us to understand context-specific inequalities better, but it also makes us more sensitive to the ways in which mobilities are differentiated by processes and actors both within and outside the realm of ‘the state’. Following Cresswell (2010, 20), we argue that mobilities are implicated in the production of power—what he calls ‘politics of mobility’—while being sensitive to the fact that politics of mobility are highly relational in the sense that the mobility of some might create relative immobilities for others (Adey 2006).

Within this conceptual framework, we study outdoor retail markets as places where rules, regulations and localized practices related to mobilities enmesh. Our study is positioned in the European context, analysing non-permanent outdoor marketplaces in the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK. Marketplaces lend themselves particularly well to grasping empirically the temporal emplacement of regimes of mobilities because of their fluid nature ‘where material and intangible flows—of people, goods, times, senses, affect—come to rest, terminate, emerge, merge, mutate and/or merely pass through, and are contingent and relational to each other’ (Seale 2016, 2).

Recent work has particularly focused on how marketplaces function as spatially enclosed and distinct (urban) spaces where diversity and social inclusion coexist with conflict and reproduction of inequalities (e.g. Morales 2009; Watson 2009; Janssens and Sezer 2013; Van Eck 2022). In this article, we move beyond the idea that marketplaces are fixed and closed localities with clear demarcations in space and time. Instead, we stress the relevance of local, translocal and transnational social networks, spatial relations, trajectories and mobilities on and beyond the markets that run ‘into’ and ‘out’ of marketplaces and co-constitute them (Etzold 2016; MMP 2022a, 4; see also Darling 2009, Menet and Dahinden 2023, Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016). In doing so, we particularly focus on the central role of market traders in the socio-material production of marketplaces and their contributions to the ‘sense of a buzz’ permeating these sites (Watson 2009, 1589).

In the following we first construct an analytical framework that brings into dialogue discussions around place relations (Massey 2004a, 2005) and regimes of mobilities (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). Instead of disentangling regimes according to different and fixed governmental scales, we put forward a lens that stresses how regimes of mobilities continuously unfold in place and how people subjected to regimes negotiate asymmetric power relations (Eule, Loher, and Wyss 2018). Afterwards we introduce our methodology. The empirical material is based on ethnographic work on and beyond different marketplaces in Switzerland, the Netherlands and

the United Kingdom. We describe the fluid and mobile nature of a marketplace demonstrating how regimes of mobilities become emplaced and produce differentiated mobilities among market traders. Our findings lead to a reflection on the intersection of different regimes of mobilities and the skills required to navigate the related dynamics.

2. Placing regimes of mobility: a theoretical lens

To place regimes of mobilities, we start from the widely embraced argument of feminist geographer Doreen Massey that the identity of a place is not only 'a product of what goes on within it' (Massey 2004a, 98) but that it derives, in large part, precisely from the specificity of interactions with 'the outside' (Massey 2005). In other words, the ways in which local practices or local economies unfold are based on a various relations with other places. From this point of view, places are not the fixed opposites of mobilities (Baerenholdt and Granas 2008, 2) but rather, places and mobilities are co-constitutive (see also Salazar, in this issue). This relational understanding of place is particularly relevant for the study of marketplaces. We have observed how traders, goods, materials, customers, and information come from multiple 'elsewheres' that together (re-)make the market on a daily basis (MMP 2022a; see also Breines, Menet and Schapendonk 2021). If places consist of constantly unfolding relations, we should remain sensitive to the question of power in these relations (Amin 2004; Massey 2004b). To turn to Massey's work once more: 'Each local economy is a distinct mix of relations over which there is some power and control and other relations within which the place may be in a position of subordination' (Massey 2004a, 100; 2005). From this, we argue that the concept of regimes lends itself particularly well to studying how mobilities are differentiated and hierarchically related in particular places.

The notion of 'regime' is used in many fields in the social sciences and is far from being novel. Some studies have attempted to elaborate a genealogy of the regime concept (Horvath, Amelina, and Peters 2017; Rass and Wolff 2018) by exploring its emergence and uses. Yet, the interpretation and application of the concept vary considerably across these different fields, for example between international relations studies (Krasner 1983) or feminist writings (Walby 2020). The notion of regime is particularly present in the field of migration studies. 'Migration regime' or 'border regime' are widely used terms to describe regulatory powers of states and supra-states that aim to manage cross-border mobility (e.g. Rass and Wolff 2018; De Genova 2017; Tsianos and Karakayali 2010; Kloppenburg 2013). Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) introduced the concept of 'regimes of mobility' to differentiate between forms of (human) mobilities and explicitly link these differentiations to questions of political economy. 'Regimes of mobility' is deployed by Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013, 188) to 'explore the relationship between the privileged movements of some and the co-dependent but stigmatized and forbidden movement, migration and interconnection of the poor, powerless and exploited'. Glick Schiller and Salazar mainly discuss regimes in relation to cross-border mobility, as also amplified by others working with the notion of mobility, migration or border regimes (e.g. Schapendonk et al. 2020; Wyss 2022).

While interpretations of regimes in migration, border and mobility studies do overlap, one main difference is that some studies refer to regimes as a form of national and supranational governance that centres on formal policies, regulations and legal standards, whereas others use the notion of regime to emphasise the multitude of actors and practices involved (e.g. Tsianos and Karakayali 2010). The former set of studies has a rather top-down and systemic interpretation of regimes as governance of political orders and international standards. The latter regards regimes as 'spaces of negotiating practices' and, as a consequence, approach the regulations involved not as fixed guidelines but as 'condensations of social actions' (Tsianos and Karakayali 2010, 275). In both interpretations, no matter how complex and dynamic regimes are defined, the studies mostly relate the question of regimes to the capacity of states and supra-states to

govern mobility. In this paper, we propose to move beyond this *international* and *state-centred* approach by relating regimes to everyday mobilities and the production of markets as particular places.

At the most general level, regimes of mobilities comprise all sorts of mechanisms that (il)legitimize and differentiate mobilities, and that order mobilities into hierarchies, including 'relative immobilities' (Adey 2006). Using this concept from a place-perspective enables us to study how these mechanisms feed and relate to locally embedded practices. In other words, such an approach allows us to 'ground' the regime concept and relate it to everyday practices of legitimizing, disqualifying, and differentiating mobilities in and beyond marketplaces.

Simultaneously, our approach allows us to identify different interacting regimes of mobilities – regimes of the market, 'national' regimes of borders, and 'transnational' regimes of, for example, neoliberal policy, racialisation and gender – and thereby point to different power systems that co-constitute places. In this regard, our understanding of a regime perspective indeed implies that we cannot isolate local practices from governmental power on national or international levels, as also noted by Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013). Regimes do not operate as Russian dolls from where we can simply isolate one scale from another (see also Massey 2004a; Massey 2004b, 2005), but they are constantly co-constructed by a wide range of actors (including (supra)state actors, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, market organizations, to name just a few) and their practices, norms, values, and discourses (see Rass and Wolff 2018, 44).

Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013, 189) elaborate on this aspect by arguing that regimes articulate 'the role of both individual states and of changing international regulatory and surveillance administration that affect individual mobilities. At the same time, the term reflects a notion of governmentality and hegemony in which there are constant struggles to understand, query, embody, celebrate and transform categories of similarity, difference, belonging and strangeness'. As such, regimes of mobilities are intertwined with categorisations of difference, including forms of symbolic boundary drawing that often reflect gendered, classed, racialized or migrantized representations.

3. Methodology and descriptions of the markets

Our empirical analysis builds on ethnographic material collected during several phases between 2019 and 2021 across three countries: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Switzerland. As such, our analysis is embedded in a European context, meaning that we refrain from universalizing claims. Marketplaces in other parts of the world might be produced very differently, by other types of mobilities and regimes (see for insightful studies: Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016; Jónsson 2019).

Our data collection focused primarily on the experiences and perspectives of market traders, contrasting these to the perspectives of institutional actors regulating and managing marketplaces. Starting from two marketplaces in each country, we first conducted semi-structured interviews with relevant institutional bodies and state actors (like market managers, politicians, etc.). We then made use of mobile ethnography (see for more details Breines et al. 2021) by following traders in their everyday practices within and across different markets. This enabled us to study how traders navigate and simultaneously co-produce marketplaces through their mobility patterns and practices.

We further substantiated our data with in-depth interviews with traders, market managers and trade unions. By starting our fieldwork on the markets, we grounded our analysis in specific geographical places consisting of 'localized sets of social institutions, transactions, social actors, organizations, products, trade practices, and cultural meanings motivated by a wide variety of factors' (Bestor 2004, 20). Additionally, some archival work was carried out in order to better understand the ways in which traders' mobilities are framed in a geo-historical sense.

Obviously, Covid-19 has impacted our research profoundly, as marketplaces were confronted with strict regulations and a series of lockdowns. While it undoubtedly hampered data collection, the disruptive effects of the pandemic provided us, at the same time, with key insights into the normalization of some mobilities. This period can indeed be seen as a form of turbulence that made visible the ‘entanglement of ordering practices’ behind everyday mobilities (Cresswell and Martin 2012).

Although we collected data from different countries, our aim is not to offer a systematic comparison of the different case studies. Rather, we use the data to operationalize our theoretical framing in terms of *placing* regimes of mobilities and their underlying logics. In this article, we focus on what González and Waley (2013) have called ‘traditional’ markets, i.e. markets providing both food and/or non-food products to existing communities on a weekly or daily basis. The markets we studied are thus different from the rapidly emerging ‘niche’ markets, such as craft, organic, street food and theme markets that especially cater to the consumption tastes of higher-income residents and tourists. They are non-permanent regulated spaces. Most of them are either owned and managed by city councils or by specific governmental divisions, such as departments of market and retail affairs.

For each country included in the project, we selected an urban and not-so-urban market. For the UK, we selected one market in East London and one market in a smaller town on the coast. The market in East London, is at the centre of the neighbourhood, with the main rail and tube station, but most of the commercial development and activity are located around the High Street. The area has a diverse, ethnically mixed population and the market traders and shoppers reflect this diversity. The market complements the many shops that line the main street, attracting more customers into the shops on the days when the market is returning. The market stalls sell a great variety of items, including food, clothes and household goods. The market is run by the local council and is open five days a week, Tuesday-Saturday.

The market on the English south coast operates only on Wednesdays, in the centre of town, with stalls lining the High Street and a central square. The seaside town where it is located has a large proportion of elderly people. Compared with the London area the population is far less diverse, with 65% identifying as having ‘English only identity’, and residents are relatively well-off with most people of working age in employment and very few claiming benefits. The market has forty allocated pitches and there is an emphasis on ‘quality’ products. Most traders are white British men, many of whom are approaching retirement age.

For the Netherlands, we selected a market in Amsterdam and a not-so-urban market in the south of the country. The market in Amsterdam is a large, rectangular market located in the centre of an ethnically diverse and relatively low-income neighbourhood on the western outskirts of the city. The market is surrounded by ethnic supermarkets and cafes, a large indoor shopping centre, residential apartment blocks, and a busy traffic intersection of streets, tram tracks, and bus lines. Many traders and customers have a migration background. Each side of the square hosts different trade activities. The outer ring is populated by food traders selling food such as French fries and doner kebab, while the central area features traders selling predominantly clothes, household products, and Mediterranean vegetables and fruits. The market is owned and managed by the municipal department of Market Affairs. On a regular day, two to three market managers, all working for the department of Market Affairs, supervise trade activities, collect market rents, and ensure that traders obey the rules and regulations as outlined in municipal regulations.

Unlike the Amsterdam market, the not-so-urban market in the south of the country only takes place on Thursdays. This means that traders who work there are also active on other markets during the week to secure a steady income. The market is known as an autonomized market, meaning that management responsibilities have moved from the local government to a trader-led organization.

For Switzerland, we selected a food market in French-speaking western Switzerland and a market of goods in Zurich, the country's financial and cultural centre. These two types of markets usually take place separately and differ in terms of their frequency, the goods sold and hence the merchants present. The fresh food market we chose takes place on Tuesdays and Saturdays, with traders arriving in the early morning hours to build up their stalls and present vegetables, fruit, cheese, meat, fish, bakery products and flowers. Almost a third of the stalls are run by farmers from the region, while the remaining traders are reselling produce.

Unlike the regular food market, the market of goods in Zurich takes place once a month in a former industrial area which was renovated at the end of the 1990s. The neighborhood's market square has undergone physical renewal in the beginning of the 2000s to make space for restaurants and cafes at the borders of the square. The traders present sell clothes, leather goods, underwear, jewellery, shoes, brooms, dry fruits and secondhand books. As this market takes place only once a month, traders travel from other towns, as far as a two hours' drive to participate in the market. The market is managed by the Swiss market association.

These short descriptions of the markets make clear that they are quite different in terms of their everydayness, traders backgrounds and management structures. Yet, as we will show in the following, they are simultaneously all the result of placed regimes of mobilities. On all markets we find mobilities that are categorized and ordered into hierarchies and entangled with regimes of mobilities: These mobilities are locally embedded and subjected to socio-historical dynamics – hence they are locally *specific* – yet, the regime perspective allows us to also point to more generalized dynamics.

4. Markets and multi-layered regimes of mobilities

We start the empirical discussion with a vignette that consists of a 'montage' of different in-place observations of the marketplaces we studied. Montaging as method does not serve here to represent a surreal or utopian imagination (see Aparna et al. 2020 on montaging as method). It rather functions as a jumping-off point that allows us to paint a picture of *any possible marketplace* among those we studied, instead of *a very particular marketplace* and to therefore elaborate on the communalities. Later in the analysis we will return to the localized nuances between the marketplaces.

Like every Thursday morning, Sofia and Peter are busy. They just parked their van on the market square to unload the clothes they will be selling today. Building up their market stall, they display the clothes on their stand in the most attractive way. They have about twenty minutes left to finish off their preparations. The weekly outdoor market will soon turn into a vibrant pedestrian space. But before this can happen, Sofia and Peter first have to drive their van to the nearby parking lot where it will serve as extra storage space.

As soon as the van has been emptied, the first market manager enters the scene. The market manager walks to the traders immediately opposite of Peter and Sofia's stall. He kindly, but firmly, asks them to relocate to the very end of the street. Sofia reckoned that these traders had once again tried to occupy the coveted 'central' spot of the market without having the permission to do so.

Peter is the more experienced trader of the couple. He inherited his market trader license from his parents. Sofia, a migrant from Latin America, faced many barriers before she could enter the marketplace as a trader. In a conversation, she shared how the market was both a curse and a blessing in the period after her arrival. It was one of the places where she could earn money as a kind of informally hired assistant. At the same time, she complained about the hard labour for little money.

In the last eight years, the couple has multiplied their trading locations. They started with two locations but now circulate among four different markets in the region. They have also expanded the range of products they sell, from local ones to Latin America goods, thanks to the transnational networks of Sophia. Their gradual progress, however, has been replaced by a deep uncertainty lately. When it hit in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed numerous aspects of their trading practices. In the first months, their markets closed down completely in the face of government-mandated orders. After their (partial) reopening, the social-spatial transformations remained, having a direct impact on Peter and Sofia because of the relocation of their market pitches.

The preceding vignette illustrates the manifold mobility-driven character of marketplaces that we observed for all our case studies. As such, translocality and transnational networks lie at the heart of the production of markets (Etzold 2016; Bestor 2004). In this regard, some authors refer to the transient character of public (urban) spaces by articulating how mobilities and translocal relations feed everyday socio-spatial dynamics (Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016, 129). In other words, the mobility practices of traders transform streets into markets by building up market stalls and inscribing traders' skills and know-how necessary to conduct business in the urban landscape. These marketplaces thus 'work' as public spaces thanks to customers meeting traders in 'co-present encounters' (Urry 2007). Although social motivations are certainly important for some traders, the mobilities of traders can to a large extent be explained by their economic rationale. They often try to maximize the number of clients by travelling to different marketplaces.

Most importantly, the vignette reveals how traders in Europe operate their businesses in an institutional landscape of intersecting regimes of mobilities. Here, it is important to recognize the historical pathways shaping the existence of marketplaces today. In some cases, marketplaces have historically emerged through governing techniques against 'unruly' street vending mobilities, immobilizing these in spatially delineated markets. Relations of gender, religion, citizenship and class, among others, were of crucial importance in differentiating 'good' versus 'not-so-good' traders.

In eighteenth-century Amsterdam, for example, street vending was generally restricted through legislation and policing activities by guilds and local authorities (Van den Heuvel 2015). Retail guilds, such as marketplace-guilds and shop-based guilds, claimed the right of selling goods in small quantities and required people to become guild members. Here, it is important to note that 'retail guilds only accepted citizens as members, and generally favoured men over women, guild members' offspring over others, and Protestants over people from other religious denominations (especially Jews)' (Van den Heuvel 2015, 373). This excluded marginalized street vendors (such as women and Jewish immigrants) from being institutionally recognized as 'formal' market traders. A similar dynamic has been observed for the East London market: In the book 'Memories from the Hight Street' (Howes 1977) older residents recall some of the stallholders from the 1920s and 30s, in which they talk exclusively of men: They prominently cite 'The Cough Drop Man', the 'Bicycle Man', 'The Razor Man', and so on.

In both public and governmental parlance, the uncontrollable mobility patterns and sounds of street vendors were considered a 'nuisance' to the order and safety of the city, as Veronica Huberts (1940, 32), who wrote her dissertation on street vendors in 20th century Amsterdam, noted. Similarly, the smells of the market were often perceived as a nuisance. In London, it was in 1932 that the Borough Council introduced a licensing system for the traders in the East London market, using the money to help pay for cleaning up the aftermath of the markets, but also to reduce the mobility of the street vendors (Stuchfeld 1991, 15).

In general, we might say that the hostile reactions to mobile street vendors are underpinned by 'sedentarist' thinking, which assumes moral primacy of fixity over mobility in space. Interestingly, such hierarchisation of im/mobility—resulting in differentiated power among and inequalities between traders—still resonates in the contemporary mobility politics of marketplaces. For example, we heard how some market traders in Zurich despised traders who 'slept in their cars', such as supposedly non-Swiss traders without a 'real home'. Such statements illustrate the permanence of some of the anti-mobility rhetoric that is historically embedded in nation-state histories and in anti-immigrant and nationalist rhetoric (MacLaughlin 1998; Cresswell 2006).

There are also more specific place-related histories that matter to marketplaces. In federalist Switzerland, for example, selling products in a canton other than one's canton of residence was for a long time permitted or restricted by different local licensing procedures. It was not until a new national law was introduced in 1995 that access to the domestic labour market was liberalized and all marketplaces throughout Switzerland were made accessible to market traders, regardless of their place of residence in the country.¹

Thus, while we unravel regimes of mobilities in the present on all marketplaces, we acknowledge the historical legacies that have shaped today's regimes of mobilities. In the next section, we delve further into the ways in which regimes of mobilities intersect at marketplaces. We focus on two key processes: how traders gain access to the market; and how traders accordingly create the market.

4.1. Accessing the market

Traders need licenses to be allowed to trade. Although this may seem straightforward, beneath there is a complex and layered reality. We can distinguish two regimes of mobilities here: a (*supra*-)national license regime and a broader neoliberal regime that both differentiate mobilities according to migranticized categories.

First, formal rules for granting traders' licenses often directly exclude or discriminate against non-nationals from outside of Europe. In the Netherlands, people from outside the European Union (EU) without an identity card or residence permit recognized by the Dutch authorities are not able to register at the National Chamber of Commerce; a prerequisite for obtaining a trader's license. Thus, there is a supra-national border regime, which incorporates nationalist ideas of citizenship, with the result that only particular people can access the market as traders. This border regime questions and impedes access to the market for 'Othered' traders, such as Sofia in the earlier vignette.

This mechanism can further be illustrated by the trajectory of a Nepalese silversmith who moved to Switzerland to work on markets. When the silversmith lived in Nepal, he manufactured silver jewelry that he sold directly to European traders and customers. In this setting, he met his future wife from Switzerland who worked on different markets and fairs throughout the country. The Swiss woman invited him over for a few weeks to sell his products on her stand at a big fair. In the beginning, the Nepalese artist was not allowed to work in Switzerland. Therefore, the Swiss trader had to prove to the national authorities that her partner only came to represent his artwork.

As she recalls: '[W]e really had to go to the embassy in Kathmandu – the Swiss embassy. On a tray I showed them the jewellery. They really wanted to see the quality of the work. She [the officer] was very masculine, and was like 'Oh yes, these are some very nice pieces.' [Laughing]. She gave the stamp eventually'. After having travelled back and forth between Nepal and Switzerland several times, the couple decided to marry and work together on the markets in Switzerland. Accessing markets in Switzerland was finally made possible, but only after a marriage to an already established Swiss trader.

In Switzerland – and Europe more general – marriage migration is one of the few channels to get a residence permit (Moret, Andrikopoulos, and Dahinden 2021). The UK, however, differs significantly from Switzerland and the Netherlands in this regard, since immigration authorities are not involved in granting the permission to trade at British markets. The formal barriers to entering UK market trade are relatively low, and traders do not need to submit any proof of their residency status or citizenship to obtain a licence.² This enables even undocumented migrants and asylum seekers to run a stall at a British marketplace – although there is always the general risk of migrants in these circumstances getting caught by the police and being placed in detention or deported.

At the marketplaces, the above described *license regime* is entangled with a *neoliberal regime* that links city-specific redevelopment programs to migranticized and racialized representations. Many scholars around the world have shown how neoliberal redevelopment plans to revive the economic and commercial viability of markets tend to restrict equal access to markets, as well as the freedom to move to and through them (e.g. González and Waley 2013; González 2020; Blennerhasset, Moore-Cherry, and Bonnin 2021). The emergence of securitized and themed

shopping districts, the expansion of gated communities, and the spread of public-privately managed and regulated spaces have all placed limits on freedoms of mobility (Sorkin 1992; Sheller 2018). Connecting to this debate, González and Waley (2013) have argued that the general decline of marketplaces, as well as the urge of local governments to (public-) privately re-develop them, 'is part of a more general agenda for the neoliberalization of cities and urban policy and the "modernization" of public services, in which markets are seen as secondary services and obstacles for urban renaissance projects' (González and Waley 2013, 968).

In 2018, the municipality of Amsterdam introduced a new policy program to 'stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation to ensure that the residents of Amsterdam continue to have access to a complete, varied and future-proof supply of markets' (Municipality of Amsterdam 2018, 4–5). Especially the markets located in the relatively low-income and so-called ethnically diverse neighborhoods are framed as places where traders have 'insufficiently adapted their supply of goods to the changes in consumer behaviours and the competing supplies of retail chains' (Municipality of Amsterdam 2018, 28).

The ultimate goal of the new policy is to significantly reduce the days these markets are allowed to operate during the week, and many established migrant traders would face the threat of displacement and be forced to look for new selling locations in and even outside the city. Van Eck (2022) has shown that in this context of uncertainty and precarity some traders have become suspicious towards market managers and other traders, which has resulted in shouting matches, altercations and fights. Some market managers tended to fall back on migranticized stereotypes when explaining why conflicts occurred. They characterized the behavior of traders as 'petulant' and 'envious', while simultaneously reducing these traits to their assumed social-cultural attributes. 'That's the nationality', explained one white market manager. 'That's culture-specific, like really being jealous'.

These comments reflect deeply ingrained ideas in national and local integration debates about supposedly incompatible norms and values (Dahinden and Korteweg 2023). In this case, these stereotypes play out in the assumption that cultural traits constrain migrant traders' successful participation in higher-end retail activities (see also Rath et al. 2018). Such arguments, illustrated in the everyday interactions between managers and traders, justify pushing the market closer to the frontier of neoliberal redevelopment. This significantly reduces the mobility freedom of certain traders to work where they would like to in the city.

Just like the (supra-)national regime that regulates access to traders' licenses, this neo-liberal regime simultaneously defines the boundaries of 'legitimate' traders whose right to be mobile between, and sell on, particular markets tend to be conditional on certain characteristics, here ethnicity and race. Below, we outline two other regimes of mobilities that can be identified as soon as access to the market—dependent on the above described regimes of mobilities—has been achieved.

4.2. On the marketplace: mobilities regimes of (al)location

As the opening vignette has illustrated, the marketplace is a hierarchical space for traders as some locations are considered better selling spots than others. The allocation of stalls is a question of mobility in a double sense. First, a *market regime* allocates the spots where stalls (i.e. pitches) are placed, a process which triggers a battle over im/mobility of traders on the market in competition for the best and regular spots. Secondly, this regime is entangled with city-specific *transport* and *infrastructure regimes* which regulate the flows of customers to the selling locations on the market. One of the strongest illustrations of this came from London-based traders who dubbed the far end of their market as 'the graveyard', conferring a sense of quietness and inactivity to the selling locations at the edge of the market.

We have seen in all markets how traders compete against each other for the ‘good spots’. Footfall, which is linked to the potential to sell goods, tends to vary in different parts of a market; but also aspects like access to amenities (toilets, parking, coffee shops) and exposure to changing weather conditions are factors that determine how traders assess how optimal a pitch location is. The location of a stall is a question of how the traders can attract the most customers.

For instance, in terms of footfall the best spot on the market in the small town case in the UK is in front of a large shop and a department store, both of which are well-established brands on the British high street. A lot of the older, better clientele will go to those shops, and when entering or leaving the shops they walk right past the stalls located in front of them. This usually draws their attention to the stalls and they are more likely to buy something from these traders. One of the traders pointed out to the researcher that anything beyond the shoe shop just twenty metres further up the street was not a good location for a stall: ‘People don’t even look at the stalls when they walk past down there’ she said and put her flat palms by the sides of her eyes to imitate the limited ‘tunnel view’ of customers walking past, ignoring the stalls.

In this sense, marketplaces can be seen as the products of hierarchies of mobilities. During the daily operations of marketplaces, the managers and inspectors – dependent on the market these are private or state-actors – impose a particular regime of mobilities of stall allocation. The market managers and inspectors usually determine the exact location of the stalls on the market and allocate the available pitches to different traders. They also have the power to revoke locations due to certain non-welcome behavior of traders, as seen in the vignette. In the UK, the market managers and inspectors sometimes require the traders to move their stalls. This is for example the case when traders start encroaching on the middle passage between the two parallel rows of stalls, so that fire engines cannot enter the market.

Some markets have a strongly regulated system for allocating pitches, while in other markets the system is relatively informal and less strictly managed. In general, it tends to be the case that traders who have been working the longest on a market have more privileges in terms of being able to choose the location of their pitch on the market. In the Netherlands, this seniority principle is inscribed in municipal market regulations. In London, the market manager explained how he had revamped the system for allocating pitches to casual traders (i.e. those who do not trade on a regular basis at a particular market):

...before my time, the booking system [for casual traders] was first-come-first-serve basis. So you can imagine what used to happen with that; we used to have people turning up around four or five o’clock in the morning, queueing up, waiting to get the most high-profile pitches, and you can imagine people used to get into arguments like: ‘I’m here first, you weren’t there’ and all the rest of it. So we don’t operate on first-come-first-serve basis anymore but we now operate on a seniority basis.

In this case, the market manager implicitly associated the longevity of traders on the market with incremental rights, claiming it was ‘fair’ for the more senior traders to receive preferential treatment. Again, this principle of seniority reflects historically inscribed traditions that prioritize a certain form of immobility. The relatively mobile, ‘casual’, traders are treated in opposition to the more immobile, senior, traders, the rights of whom supersede those of itinerant traders. A representative of the Dutch union of market traders explained that the seniority principle has always been the most important norm and rule dictating the mobility regime of allocating market spots:

Back in the days, the seniority principle was very important... If a long-established trader was situated on the ‘bad’ side of the church, and another spot opened up on its better side, then the long-established traders were the first ones to occupy a location at the good side of the church. New traders never stood there because they had to start at the bad side. That’s after all the location where long-established traders also started their businesses.

However, being allocated a pitch in the worst part of the market meant that newcomers generally had few customers and therefore failed to establish themselves, and many quit after a short while. Financial success is thus self-reinforcing, as traders who survive the longest on the market have a better chance of securing a good location for their pitch, where they can reach more customers. A London-based market manager told us that new traders would not be given 'the best spots on a market' and only with time would move up in the ranking. In general, traders who have permanent trading licenses and who therefore have a regular presence on the market, tend to have more 'location privileges' than the casual traders. Location privileges thus not only depend on how long one has been on the market but also, being there frequently and regularly.

The hierarchy of selling spots on the market, and the micro-politics of their allocation—the market regime in place—is in most cases intertwined with the question of mobility of potential customers. Here, the local transport regime comes in. Importantly, this includes the mobility of shoppers, who tend to be present in higher numbers in the parts of the market that are closest to public transport. In the urban contexts of London or Amsterdam, underground stations and shopping malls generate direct flows of people to the nearest parts of the market; meanwhile, potential customers are less likely to venture further down to the more distant end of the market. The quantity, speed, and route of shoppers in the market is partly determined by the forms of transport by which they access the market. This is also valid for smaller marketplaces as the one we find in Switzerland.

Furthermore, it is not only important in which part of the market a trader's pitch is located; equally important is the regular presence (or indeed frequent immobility) of a trader in the exact same spot, so that customers know where to find a trader. According to the traders we spoke to, customers will assume a trader has either not turned up that day or has quit the market, if they are not present in their regular spot. A related argument was that otherwise customers would not recognize them anymore. We observed that established traders insisted on keeping their spot and did not wish to change their location.

In that sense, a relatively short-distance move might provoke controversy and protest among traders. This became particularly visible in the case of a Swiss farmers' market which usually takes place in the middle of a small town's pedestrian zone on Saturdays. When the square, where the market was originally located, turned out to be too small and spatial competition with adjoining coffee bars and restaurants became unbearable, the market organizers together with the city council decided to extend the market to a bordering street. Despite this projects' large support from the traders, the city councilor told us in an interview:

We had to see with the market traders, who would agree to come to the [new location], although some families had been in their spot for 40-50 years, to the exact centimeter. They didn't want to move even one meter!

When markets run only once or twice a week in the same place, as in the case of Switzerland and the less urban case in the Netherlands, traders tend to become highly mobile between different marketplaces. A publication by the Swiss market federation from 2010 provides an idea about the mobilities of traders between different markets: the reports states that the 2700 itinerant traders in Switzerland work on average 182 market days for 14 hours a day. On average they drive 61 km per market, with a maximum distance of 300 km. 73% of the traders have a stable yearly program. 53% of them work on markets in cities, while 39% work on markets in the countryside (Schweizerischer Marktverband 2010).

Although such statistics are to be taken with caution, they illustrate the necessity of travel for market traders to attract shoppers. A trading couple, selling textiles and bed linen told that in earlier days they also had a store, next to their business on wheels. When the researcher asked them why they drove all over Switzerland to go to markets instead of having a store, they told her that with the store they only had clientele from the village, with 2500 inhabitants. 'That's not

much, a radius of 50 km. But at a fair, the visitors come from all over Switzerland'. And on regularly held markets, they have a large regular clientele. More generally, keeping up good relationships with their regular clientele in different marketplaces appeared to be an important skill for traders, and this skill is combined with a particular 'need to travel' (Jónsson 2019).

The Covid-19 pandemic rendered highly visible the regimes of mobilities we have discussed here. In fact, it reinforced the regimes in place, with significant ramifications for marketplaces (see Van Eck, Van Melik, and Schapendonk 2020; MMP 2022b) and for traders such as Sofia and Peter in the vignette. At all observed markets, stalls that were operating during the pandemic had to be spaced out from each other to allow for social distancing rules on the market. This imposed mobility of stalls caused much frustration on the part of traders.

These temporary regulations left little space for traders' insistence on the importance of customers knowing exactly where their stall was located, and the havoc caused by moving stalls around. One trader in the south of the UK was told to move just a few metres to one side and was so furious about this that he decided to quit the market. In the case of the not-so-urban Swiss farmers' market, the city council decided to relocate the weekly farmers' market to different neighborhoods during the first COVID lockdowns in 2020. While some traders accepted this solution, others refused coming to the market for several weeks and started selling their goods elsewhere, for example in local shops. Even after their return to the market they had regrets about the loss of their regular customers, who could no longer find them after their move to another site further away from the market.

Importantly, as we have seen, the traders try to negotiate their im/mobility by using manifold tactics. For example, at the market in London, some of the more established traders have secured licenses for several pitches in the attractive end of the market and are illegally subletting these to other traders. This might appear to be a cunning solution for a newcomer to access a high footfall quickly, instead of waiting to work their way up the market. However, the relative homogeneity of traders in terms of gender and ethnicity (mostly men of South Asian Muslim background) in this section of the market suggests that subletting did not necessarily equalise opportunities for newcomers but potentially (re)produced social boundaries and hierarchies in the market. In this sense they were important actors contributing to and reproducing these two regimes of mobility. We might say that a 'good trader' is one who manages to navigate through particular micropolitical tactics. Yet, it seems that a trader who is not racialized or migranticized and who is senior in terms of being on the market for a long time will have most power to secure not only 'a good spot' but also to be able to remain on the same spot, attracting the maximum number of clients.

5. Conclusion

In this article we mobilized the concept of regimes of mobilities to address some of the concerns regarding the nation-state centered and sedentarist foundations of social sciences. Concretely, we have suggested to combine the regimes of mobilities concept with a relational understanding of place. By so doing, we have further developed the concept of regimes of mobilities in two ways. While regimes of mobilities have usually been linked to (supra)state practices regulating international mobility, we have demonstrated that regimes of mobilities can also provide new analytical insights into (1) the entanglement of different forms of mobilities that unfold themselves in (2) the everyday realities of particular places – in this case: marketplaces.

Our analysis of marketplaces in the Netherlands, the UK and Switzerland revealed that markets are not only the product of manifold mobilities (see MMP 2022a), but that in markets a variety of regimes of mobilities intersect and produce differentiated mobilities (and immobilities) which are hierarchically related and accompanied by symbolic representations and categorisations. By 'placing' regimes of mobilities, we have shown how markets are made up of a plurality

of regimes in which rules and regulations (that may come from different governmental bodies) intersect or clash and speak to locally embedded histories and practices of marketplaces.

Traders' access to markets, for instance, is not only defined by locally instituted rules and regulations but reflects at least two intersecting regimes of mobilities that operate at different levels. First, we identified a (supra-) national license regime that regulates access to markets and often excludes nationals from outside Europe. Second, we found that planning programmes, and in particular urban redevelopment plans, also constitute a regime of mobilities. This relates to questions of locality and accessibility as well as the design of the market (and the allocation of spots). However, these planning imaginaries often reflect neoliberal and migrantized representations of traders leading to questions of legitimacy of presence and mobility (see also Van Eck 2022).

Additionally, two intersecting regimes of mobilities differentiate and produce hierarchies of the im/mobilities of traders on the market as soon as access has been reached. We have delineated a regime of market spot allocation that is entangled with a city-specific transport and infrastructure regime that regulates the mobility of potential customers. Importantly, these different regimes of mobilities are not isolated or static but impinge on each other. The concept of regimes of mobilities allows for identifying these multiple systems of rules, regulations and norms, and hence, to systematically direct attention to the different power systems that affect the supposedly 'mundane' mobilities that constitute place.

Yet, there are limitations to our analysis of regimes of mobilities and marketplaces. We decided to focus our endeavor on *human mobilities*, mainly of traders. It would be productive to also investigate regimes of mobilities and marketplaces that include consumers. Furthermore, mobility scholars have also included a wide range of mobilities of non-human actors in their theorizations (Urry 2007). In other words, there are more regimes of mobilities that affect markets and deserve further research attention. Think, for example, of regimes regulating the flows of goods that are sold on marketplaces (Bestor 2004) or regimes regulating sanitary and hygienic rules or sounds on markets (Lindmäe 2022).

What is important to acknowledge is that traders deal with these intersecting regimes at the very same time. This positions them in a multi-scalar and translocal topology of power (e.g. Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016). At the same time, as we have seen, many of the traders also move regularly between marketplaces and a considerable number of them forge entrepreneurial relations across borders. Thus, a closer look at their practices would lead to more translocal realities. It requires significant individual and collective skills to work through this highly dynamic institutional landscape. Acknowledging and making visible these capacities of traders would further destabilize the popular discourse that portrays traders as low-skilled workers (Watson 2022).

Notes

1. https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1996/1738_1738_1738/de (accessed on May 15, 2022)
2. See <https://www.gov.uk/street-trading-licence>. Note that the UK tax authorities are also not involved in the licensing process, since traders in the UK are self-employed and therefore individually responsible for separately reporting their income to the tax authorities.

Ethics statement

This Research Project had Ethic Approval following Open University guidelines (Open University is the leading University of this research consortium).

Informed consent

We confirm that research participants have provided informed consent, at times in written form, but most often orally.

Authors' contributions

This article is the product of a collaborative dialogue. Janine Dahinden and Joris Schapendonk mainly wrote the theoretical and conceptual parts and contributed to the analytical parts. Gunvor Jónsson, Joanna Menet and Emil van Eck did the fieldwork and contributed with data, data analysis and conceptual issues.

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