The Politics of Public Domain: Ethical Urbanism around Marketplaces in London, Amsterdam & Istanbul
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New marketplaces pop up every day in cities around the world. As catalysts for gentrification, however, these new marketplaces are often celebrated at the expense of the public markets that they replace. This replacement is symptomatic of today's urban governance, which is characterised by what I call an ‘ethical urbanism’ -- a way of governing the city that imposes a particular ‘aesthetics’ on urban space that determines what can be seen and what can be heard, and what is merely noise.

Against the backdrop of this ethical urbanism, in which public domain is becoming increasingly marginalised, resistance develops. Those who were not visible or audible before are popping up to disrupt the prevailing story told by today's urban governance. The meaningful emergence of alternative new stories is what I call moments of ‘politics’, and constitutes public domain.

This thesis then provides an analysis of the micro-politics of public domain, as observed in the markets of Istanbul, Amsterdam and London. The question this thesis asks is: How does public domain take place in urban marketplaces? Or more specifically: What are the forces that act upon public domain in urban marketplaces that restrict their publicness, and what, on the other hand, are the characteristics of markets as a form of public space that enable the development of public domain?