

Urban Imaginaries and Socio-Spatial Arrangements: The Making of Romantic Seville

Imaginarios urbanos y arreglos socioespaciales: la creación de la Sevilla romántica

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Abstract. This article aims at interpreting the emergence and vitality of urban imaginaries. Drawing upon theories on spatialization and local representations, it contends that urban spaces develop cultural patterns that become effective in images, narratives, institutions, practices and physical environments. Focusing on the circulating and mutually reinforcing relations between local imaginaries and socio-material configurations, the article traces a genealogy of the Sevillian imaginary and the changing contexts of its reproduction in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These involve the Regionalismo movement around 1900, urban planning during the Exposición Iberoamericana (1929), the uses of folklore by the Franco Regime, as well as touristification processes and current forms of localization in a globalizing-europeizing Spain.

Resumen. El artículo pretende interpretar la emergencia y vitalidad de los imaginarios urbanos. Partiendo de las teorías sobre espacialización y representaciones locales, sostiene que los espacios urbanos desarrollan patrones culturales que resultan productivos en imágenes, narrativas, instituciones, prácticas y ambientes físicos. Centrandonos en la circulación y el mutuo reforzamiento de las relaciones entre imaginarios locales y configuraciones socio-materiales, el artículo traza una genealogía del imaginario sevillano y de los contextos cambiantes de su reproducción en los siglos XIX y XX. Esto incluye al movimiento regionalista, de alrededor de 1900, la planificación urbana durante la Exposición Iberoamericana de 1929, los usos del folklore por el régimen de franquista, así como los procesos de turistificación y las formas actuales de localización en una España globalista-europeísta.

Keywords. Urban anthropology; urban imaginaries; Spain; urban history; urban studies; tourism.

Palabras clave. Antropología urbana; imaginarios urbanos; España; historia urbana; estudios urbanos; turismo.

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Introduction

I have courtyards with orange trees/ and full of orange blossoms/ (...) Gypsies at my windows/ (...) and I have the Feria de Abril/ and I have Semana Santa/ and I have the Guadalquivir/ (...) I have walls and the Alcázar/ and the Torre del Oro, too/ and the Real Maestranza/ for the evenings' bullfights/ (...) and the cathedral with the Giralda/ which no one else has (Coria & Díaz, 1998)^{1 2}.

Feel the steamy, passionate embrace of Seville for the first time, and you'll know that you're somewhere unforgettable. This is the home of the soul-ripping sound of flamenco, the sombre and spectacular Semana Santa (Holy Week) processions, the glory and gore of bullfighting, and the jolly relief of Feria de Abril. Seville is where highly strung Carmen rolled Cigars on her thighs and loved a bullfighter, it's where Don Juan worked his mojo in times long gone, and it's where Cervantes and Columbus knocked back glasses of sherry. Shrouded in its pungent cloak of orange blossom and dressed in art and culture, Seville is spellbinding (Lonely Planet, 2009, p. 35)³.

If we give credence to these recent portrayals of Seville, one in a local song and one in a tourist guide, we might think that time has been standing still. Flamenco dancers, gypsies, and toreros lie in wait around the corner. The two major festivities of Seville, the Holy Week (Semana Santa) and the Feria de Abril, which arose from a cattle market initiated in 1847, still maintain their archaic spirit, and Carmen, Columbus, Don Juan and other characters are strolling around twisted streets and Moorish palaces. Seville, in this

¹ Spanish quotations were translated by the author.

² Coria, Paco & Díaz, Juan (1997). Pregonando Sevilla. In Los Romeros de la Puebla: *Dejando huella*. Sevilla: Ediciones Senador, s.l. (disc).

³ Lonely Planet (2009). *Andalusia*. Melbourne: lonely planet publications.

perspective, is a place imbued with images and tales of an old order. It is the same city that was sketched by nineteenth-century travelers, painters and authors like Serafín Estébanez Calderón (1799-1867), Prosper Mérimée (1805-1870), David Roberts (1796-1864), and Washington Irving (1783-1859).

How did these representations evolve, and why are they so durable? In which ways do they relate to the lives of the Sevillian population? This article brings together findings from literary studies and art history with urban theory to investigate the genesis of the Sevillian imaginary and its reproduction as a result of both local and translocal factors.⁴ It conceives of urban imaginaries as «socially transmitted representational assemblages» (Salazar, 2012, p. 864) that do not emerge and persist independently from a social base, but are embedded and embodied in material structures and social practices (Musner, 2009, p. 46). In this perspective, urban assemblages are both fluid and adjust to changing historical contexts as well as they exert power over a city's political and economic development in an increasingly globalized world. Accordingly, to study imaginaries of place in their relations to socio-material settings provides a theoretical lens to overcome the “dialectic relationship between global and local processes in the construction and reconstruction of urban environments” (Pacione, 2001, p. 16). The article starts discussing various approaches in urban studies that focus on the circulating and mutually reinforcing relations between local representations and socio-material configurations (e.g., Musner, 2009; Löw, 2008; Lee, 1997). Then, developing such perspectives on the example of Seville, it first examines the formative processes of ‘imagineering’⁵ in the nineteenth century, which were highly determined by the cultural contact between bourgeois travelers and an upcoming agrarian bourgeoisie. Secondly, the article follows the consolidation of these Romantic⁶ images. Their perpetuation took place under very different socio-political conditions in a variety of contexts, such as the Regionalismo movement around 1900, urban planning and marketing during the Exposición Iberoamericana in 1929, the ideological uses of folklore by the Franco Regime, and current forms of touristification and localization in a globalizing-europeanizing Spain.

Images of the City and Socio-Material Arrangements

How geographical territories, and especially cities, become associated with collective images and themes is a widely researched topic in the interdisciplinary field of urban studies.⁷ However, there is hardly any scholarship on how these representations are connected with socio-material configurations of space and how they have an impact on political and economic developments. The few studies of this kind are decidedly holistic⁸ and develop integral concepts such as ‘intrinsic logics of place’ (Löw, 2008), ‘landscapes

⁴ The findings are based on an anthropological dissertation which investigates the city of Seville as a distinct socio-spatial-symbolical configuration (Schwab, 2013). With the aim of disentangling and methodologically reconstructing its interwoven ‘textures’, this research addresses various dimensions of the urban complex, such as history and memory, material environments, corporal and behavioral routines, established forms of responding to social and economic challenges, and literary-artistic as well as everyday representations of the city itself.

⁵ Although being a registered trademark of the Walt Disney Company, the term “imagineering” is often used in urban theory and geography to allude to the construction of operative systems that manage the reproduction of collective imaginaries.

⁶ Notwithstanding their diffuseness, I still draw upon the terms ‘Romantic’ and ‘Romanticism’ as organizational principles, because in relation to representations of space there is a significant coherence in themes and writers of the time in question (see, e.g., Byrne, 2013). For example, there is a clear and self-conscious opposition to classical schemes, which becomes manifest in transformations of historical taste and new valuations of nature. Also, representations of physical and social environments become more and more connected with human self-awareness, as well as political consciousness (whether it be reactionary or revolutionary, nationalistic or universalistic) becomes an inherent aspect in representations of space. For a critical overview on the use of the concepts of ‘Romantic’ and ‘Romanticism’, see Haines & Strathman (2010).

⁷ See, e.g., Byrne (2013), Reckwitz (2009), Weiss-Sussex and Bianchini (2006).

⁸ Such holistic approaches to cities have not remained uncontested within geographical and cultural research. The most important objection is that assumptions about the durability of urban configurations and connectedness between imaginaries and socio-material arrangements promote the naturalization of social structures and the essentialization of cultural traits (as being connected to ‘fixed’ geographic settings) (Kemper & Vogelwohl, 2011; Bloomfield, 2006; Soja, 1991). One might also respond that comprehensive approaches to cities neglect the social

of taste' (Musner, 2008), 'local structures of feeling' (Taylor et al., 1996) or 'habitus of place' (Lee, 1997) to grasp (1) the *interdependencies* between social structures, material layers, and collective imaginaries and (2) the *historical* dimension of urban imaginaries⁹. For instance, applying Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" on urban developments, Martyn Lee (1997) contends that cultural inscriptions of space must not be regarded as independent from their physical and social foundations. According to Lee, in the interplay of internal factors (geography, economic resources, climate, etc.) and external factors (migration, the development of city networks, regional and national politics and economy, etc.) cities develop particular cultural dispositions ('city habitus'). Although this 'city habitus' adapts to altering conditions, Lee suggests that cities have «relatively enduring cultural orientations, which exist and function relatively independently of their current populations» (ibid., p. 132). Accordingly, cultural orientations, such as conservatism or openness towards new technologies, are anchored in economic and social structures and institutions, in urban self-narratives, and symbolisms.

If Lee's considerations on the city habitus as well as Taylor's (1996) study on 'local structures of feeling' first and foremost point to cultural and political orientations that precondition urban developments, the evolution of urban imaginaries and their embeddedness in socio-material structures have first been explored by Anselm Strauss, who has transferred the premises of symbolic interactionism on cities (Strauss, 1961)¹⁰. Since it is not possible for the urbanites to grasp a city as a whole, Strauss writes, they depend on building up a «set of associations» (ibid., p. 5), which enables them to arrange their lives within it. This set is socially mediated through political debates, personal conversation, monuments, spatial practices and through the local press (ibid., pp. 5-6). The sociologist Gerald Suttles has extended Strauss' interactionist perspective and put an emphasis on the durability of local representations and culture (Suttles, 1984). According to Suttles, the considerable solidity of local representations/images is owed to (1) the persistence of certain cultural media, especially rituals and material culture; (2) the representations' «mnemonic relatedness and assumption of characterological unity» (ibid., p. 302); and (3) the enduring influence of particular social groups, who impose their readings of the city. For Suttles, who mainly deals with American cities, these 'local boosters', who have the power over the decisive media to propagate local representations, consist of businessmen, politicians and journalists (ibid., p. 296).

To develop further Suttles' observations about influential groups, which addresses the links between urban imaginaries and their social base, and to explain the hegemony of distinct representations, we might conceptualize social positions from which symbolic orders of place are successfully controlled (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2006, p. 217). These positions have evolved under particular local and translocal conditions, and they exist quite independently of individual agents. As Suttles suggests, the hierarchical configuration of such positions might be caused by the structuring force of local economies (Suttles, 1984, p. 291), but there are other forces that impinge on the networks of power. This is particularly valid for Mediterranean cities with their long-standing history before the age of industrialization. In Seville, besides the agrarian elite, whose actual economic functions have become negligible in the late twentieth century (but not its symbolic and political power), it is the religious fraternities, consolidated out of the medieval guilds and revitalized in the nineteenth century, who have a strong impact on local culture and city images until today (Moreno, 2006; Rodríguez Mateos, 1998).

Romantic Incriptions

«Carmen has wiped out everything», Jesús Cotta comments on the transformation of the Sevillian imaginary during the nineteenth century¹¹. And indeed, nineteenth-century novels, travel accounts, city

heterogeneity of urban settings and the variety of access to urban life (cf. Wirth, 1997; Hannerz, 1980). This perspective puts an emphasis on the fact that everyone, according to education, profession, district of residence and work, gender, self-conception, etc., has his or her own way of perceiving and appropriating urban environments.

⁹ See also the comparative study on the cities of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles by Abu-Lughod (1999).

¹⁰ The book, *Images of the American City*, has been reedited in 2014 by Transaction Publishers.

¹¹ Javier González-Cotta. La desgracia de sevilla es no haber tenido un Picasso o un Dalí. In *El Mundo*. Edición Sevilla, 12.05.2008. http://www.editorialalmuzara.com/img/0_dossier_1210757611.pdf (29.11.2011).

guides, autobiographical writings, paintings and illustrations don't talk much about the imperial city of Philipp II and Charles V and its function as the gate to the Americas, neither do we find significant references to Seville as the site of the Spanish Inquisition and its numerous wealthy monasteries. In contrast, these representations display a city with vivid popular traditions, such as the Holy Week processions, the bull-fight, singing and dancing, and an appealing history with Moorish and Christian warriors. These elements were already tangible in the city of the Ancien Régime, yet it required a certain sensibility to provide them with aesthetic value. The prerequisite for this new perceptive scheme was an overlapping of cultural habits and mentalities, which in Seville came into effect during the 1830s. In this period, a new bourgeois taste regime extended over Southern Spain, first via a considerable amount of travelers, mainly coming from England and France, and secondly, by the cultural dominance of a consolidating bourgeoisie, which was in the need of new models of aesthetics and lifestyle (Braojos, 1993)¹². The larger context of this sociocultural development was the end of the absolutist regime of Ferdinand VII in 1833, which gave way to defeudalization and the emergence of a rural bourgeoisie, a large portion of which choose to live in urban settings (Shubert, 1991, pp. 118-123). This group, along with members of the former aristocratic and clerical elites, soon formed an urban oligarchy, whose cultural models would be ruling in Seville until far into the twentieth century (Bernal, 1995; Braojos, 1993). At the same time, the political opening-up of Spain contributed to the attraction of travelers, and after the dismissal of the Inquisition and Ancien Régime structures, many exiled Spaniards coming back from France and London enhanced the import of Romantic aesthetics (Llorens, 1979)¹³.

The importance of nineteenth-century patterns of representing Seville is a widely researched topic in literary studies, local historiography, and art history (see, for instance, Fundación Focus Abengoa, 2003; Braojos, 1993; González Troyano, 1992a; Valdivieso 1991). Conserving a medieval plan with narrow streets, material relics from its Moorish past, and oral traditions of ladies and warriors, Seville suited the interest for chivalric history and exoticism. These features were topped by expressions of popular Catholicism and the lack of radical forms of industrialization, rationalization and proletarianization. The 'oriental', 'rural', and 'popular' traits of Seville soon became reflected and promoted in the representations which travelers made of the city (González Troyano, 1992a; Valdivieso, 1991). This pattern of imagineering corresponded in many ways with local anxieties about cultural homogenization with regard to French hegemony and the conservatism of the rural elites (old and new), who were concerned about legitimizing the social order (González Troyano, 1992b). Therefore, the cultural phenomena travelers came across in Seville and Andalusia, such as expressions of popular music and dancing, the bull-fight, vivid fairs and pilgrimages, medieval legends and 'anachronistic' professions and production methods, also by the inner circles of the city were considered as local emblems and used as resources to «resist to the levelling forces of a so-called progress, [...] and justifying the uniqueness of Seville dating back to antiquity. New images and Sevillian forms of behaviour [...] were elevated to the limb of the new Romantic myths» (González Troyano, 1992a, p. 95).

Within these Romantic narratives we can discern generative discursive lines, which affect the production of local images until our times. Among these, the theme of the 'rural' and 'popular city' has become particularly effective. During the 1830s, a new predilection for the 'authentic' (which means, a world spared by cosmopolitanization and increasing technicality) favoured an aesthetization of the rural imprint of the city's landscape and certain cultural expressions of the lower classes (Serrano, 1993). Contemporary writings and paintings of the rural fairs, pilgrimages, processions and other manifestations of popular belief demonstrate that both foreign travelers and the local elites enjoyed to interact with representatives of the lower strata of the social order, and how they were adapting clothes, dances and musical forms to indulge in cultural needs of recreation and identification (González Troyano, 1992a; Valdivieso, 1991). In

¹² The new taste regime could easily connect with the current of *Majismo*, which designates the predilection for 'popular' amusements and fashions and was not confined to a particular class (see Bernecker & Pietschmann, 1996).

¹³ On 'Romantic' aesthetics in Western European representations of landscapes, history and popular traditions, see Byrne (2013), Biztray (2002), and Scaramellini (1996).

this context, the agricultural fair *Feria de Abril* soon gained symbolic relevance and became a recurrent topic in literature and art (Salas, 1974). Its numerous tents, cattle parades, dancing and drinking sessions, peasant-like clothing and food, and the coming together of all social orders represented exactly that kind of rural and popular Andalusia that contemporary sensibilities were searching for. Moreover, from its beginning, the *Feria* was connected to the world of bull-fighting as an agrarian and ‘archaic’ system, which (apart from some documentary lithographies) was first represented in nineteenth-century painting (cf. Valdivieso, 1991, pp. 136-140). Representations of the *Feria*, as well as pilgrimages or rudimentary workshops, the passionate and erotic figure of Carmen created by Prosper Mérimée, and Serafín Estébanez Calderón’s tales of the pleasure-loving city (Estébanez Calderón, 1985), all these exaltations of ‘authentic’ and ‘unspoiled’ forms of life prepared a way of structuring the Sevillian imaginary in travel guides, movies, postcards and other media until today. Referring to the local art market in the nineteenth century, the art historian Enrique Valdivieso has stated a shift from religious and historical motifs to everyday scenes, which glorify the ‘rural’ and the ‘popular’ city in sketches of bull-fights, pilgrimages, agrarian fairs, and illustrations of marginal figures singing and dancing in front of Sevillian buildings (Valdivieso, 1991, pp. 110-129).

With regard to this change of aesthetic sensibilities on both a local and a translocal level, also the processions and beliefs of the *Semana Santa* turned into key motifs of the urban imaginary – and became highly relevant for the development of tourism. The *Semana Santa* was first documented by nineteenth-century travelers (ibid., p. 123), and the conception of the urban ritual as ‘picturesque’, ‘archaic’ and ‘sensual’ was quickly adapted by artists, writers and the local population. This was to the effect that the processions began to be celebrated as both a religious and secular event «to satisfy the identity of the Sevillian» (Robles, 2009, p. 488). In the second half of the nineteenth century, symbolic exaltation and an increasing number of visitors had a mutual impact on each other. Already by 1855, the traveler Antoine Latour described how «the steamship from Cádiz every day brings a cloud of travelers to the banks of the Guadalquivir. Everyone rushes into town to get a modest accommodation and pay a gold price. [...] You might call this an emigration, but there is nothing forced, everyone is cheerful, lively, noisy» (Latour, 1855, pp. 155-156). Hence, at the same time as the *Feria de Abril*, the *Semana Santa* was discovered as a form of cultural capital and transformed into an urban festival. From 1869 on, the fraternities (the principal promoters of the *Semana Santa*) received subventions from the city council to adapt to the requirements of tourism (Colón, 2011)¹⁴, and the agrarian elites contributed considerably to the wealth of the fraternities. The journalist Francisco Robles has deemed this development in the second half of the nineteenth century as a mere staging of the Sevillian self:

The *carrera oficial* (the official route all processions follow) turned into a stage. They installed chairs and stands [...] The collected money helped to sustain the fraternities [...] Seville was not a port anymore, but a stage. Thus, Seville begun to feed itself, to live itself. The self-centered city (...) withdrew in a past, turning back under the pretext of Romanticism, which worked as an ideology to embrace the past. (Robles, 2009, p. 487)

The Romantic inscriptions of Seville laid the foundation for «the image of the Sevillian as something particular, unique, and typical» (Villar Movellán, 1979, p. 47). The *Feria* and the *Semana Santa* were established as local symbols, and the material, economic, social and political structures of the city were interpreted in terms of ‘authenticity’, ‘purity’, and ‘originality’. Selected popular traditions, historical eras and architectural elements were fixed and stage-managed to attract visitors from the region and from abroad, to satisfy local taste and the need for identification and to legitimize the status quo. After the middle of the nineteenth century, we can hardly see any ruptures in the Sevillian imaginary. Rather, we witness an accumulation of neo-Romantic representations of place.

¹⁴ Carlos Colón. La *Semana Santa* como inversión. *Diario de Sevilla*, 31.03.2011. <http://www.diariodesevilla.es/article/opinion/940275/la/semana/santa/como/inversion.html> (09.05.2019).

Regionalismo and the City's Transformation into its own Image

The images of the 'popular', 'picturesque', 'exotic', and 'unspoiled' city were strengthened during the second half of the nineteenth century within various discursive contexts. First, in the emerging branches of the humanities, the literary and pictorial representations of the Moorish, chivalrous city plenty of popular beliefs and traditions were transformed into elements of historiographic, architectural and folkloristic discourse (cf. Schwab, 2013). Second, in view of recently introduced technologies, these images found their way into new (popular) media, such as photography, film, postcards and posters (Portús, 1993). The art historian Javier Portús has studied the Sevillian imaginary around 1900 by analyzing the topics that prevailed in different media, in literary salons and in political settings. Portús concluded that the representations of the city were characterized by a «monotonous repetition of topics», which had originated out of its Romantic readings (Portús, 1993, p. 84).

The *Exposición Iberoamericana* in 1929 formed a decisive frame for the fixation and accumulation of these representations. The organization of the international fair involved an intensification of public reflection on the city and its future, and it had a significant urbanistic and architectural impact. The ensuing urban development program and the design of the fair's buildings and gardens followed the line of *Regionalismo*, a local expression of architectural historicism, which had consolidated around 1900 (cf. Villar Movellán, 1979). In contrast to the trend of avantgardistic architecture that dominated comparable projects in many European (and Spanish) cities, the (predominantly agrarian) elites of Seville were «seduced by nostalgic feelings towards historic styles», as the architect González Cordón puts it (1982, p. 125). According to the architectural historian Alberto Villar, the nineteenth-century's predilection for historic and exotic forms had «direct influence on architecture, from the moment in which they tried to bring into real forms the orientalizing patterns of the backgrounds of historical painting or genre painting, and, certainly, the archeological reconstructions of contemporary painters» (Villar Movellán, 1979, p. 44). *Regionalismo* architecture is based on regional craft traditions, materials and historic styles, and its characteristic elements are small towers and balconies, viewpoints, verandas, ornate fencings and the use of brick stone and iron. One of the first architectural examples of the Sevillian neos is Córdoba Station (1889). The Plaza España (1929), the main place of the *Exposición Iberoamericana*, is considered to be the high point of Sevillian *Regionalismo*, and also the district of Santa Cruz and other parts of the city were rebuilt and decorated according to the same historicizing models. Since architecture is an exceptionally visible and durable representational system, with the preparations for the *Exposición Iberoamericana* the impact of nineteenth-century patterns on spatial and aesthetic developments in Seville reached its peak. In the 1920s, large parts of the urban surface were transformed into a 'Sevillian landscape', in which hegemonic imaginations of history and local arts and crafts were connected with physical surfaces to reveal a material manifesto.



Fig. 1. Plaza España (Hans-Joachim Maquet, 2009)

There is much evidence that the neo-Romantic leitmotifs of Regionalismo and the marked autocentrism in contemporary local politics, marketing and arts were transferred to many realms of urban life. Having this in mind, Francisco Robles writes that at the beginning of the twentieth century Seville has turned «into its own image» (Robles, 2009, p. 523). It is the same image which had been designed several decades before by local and foreign ‘boosters’. The architecture and the crafts became ‘Sevillian’, ideas of urban heritage and park design, the art and literary market, playbills, decoration of the town palaces, furniture, and the music staged during Semana Santa, «everything, everything was Sevillian» (Villar Movellán, 1979, p. 85). Sevillian Regionalismo, being the answer to an intensive search for regional and local identity during the first decades of the twentieth century, has become a ‘way of life’ (ibid.), and now, if not before, the generative patterns of the urban imaginary are even fixed by those who aim to contradict them.

Franco’s Seville

The images of a ‘popular’, ‘exotic’ and ‘historical’ Seville corresponded harmoniously with the national-conservative and protectionist ideology of Franquism and with the cultural and social conservatism of the local agrarian oligarchy. I would like to discuss three aspects/contexts to illustrate how the urban imaginary was reinforced during the dictatorship (1939-1975): the strengthening of the fraternities and practices of popular Catholicism, the centralistic usurpation of ‘Andalusian’, and more specifically, ‘Sevillian’ elements as national emblems and the emerging film industry.

Throughout the twentieth century, the Sevillian fraternities, whose higher positions were mainly occupied by members of the traditionalist elite, had a significant impact on all social classes (Hurtado Sánchez, 2000). Already during the Second Republic (1931-1936), conservative groups had instrumentalized the fraternities and the Semana Santa as identity symbols against the republicans, anarchists and communists. On the other side, the Catholic manifestations represented ideological targets for leftist groups. There is a whole chronology of attacks against members of the fraternities and the wooden statues of Christ and the Madonna (Salas, 1997). Since these sculptures and the fraternities were (and are) important referents of local and familiar identification, this violent trend made the support of leftist currents more complicated. Instead, via the fraternities, huge parts of the population could be won to back the regime (see Hurtado Sánchez, 2000). The ideological use of the local-religious symbols was continued during the dictatorship. Franco himself and his military representatives in the city held the highest positions in the fraternities, participated in official events and supported the maintenance and restoration of the fraternities’ heritage (ibid.).

The activities of the fraternities and local forms of Catholicism were not only reinforced in the context of this political usurpation. Beyond that, the vivid and sensual manifestations of popular Catholicism constituted just one part of an Andalusian and Sevillian ‘folklore’ that the centralist regime used as a social glue to unify the culturally, socially, and linguistically heterogeneous country (Haller, 1992). The folkloristic imagineering drew upon exactly the same elements sketched by travelers and local elites of Seville and Andalucía during the nineteenth century. Beside the Catholic traditions, this was the art of Flamenco, which as a relatively coherent system had evolved in the suburbs of nineteenth-century Seville (cf. Bachman, 2009), the rural and ‘typical’ Feria, which was propagated as a familiar festival where all classes meet in peace (cf. Jiménez Barrientos & Gómez Larra, 1995, p. 76), and the bull-fight, which in its Sevillian form of the ritualized corrida was stylized as a “national” event (Vidal, 2003, p. 668). By this consummation of ‘folkloristic’ Seville (Andalusian folklorism mainly takes its features from its cultural center), the accumulation of the ever-same images inside and outside the city was enhanced significantly.

The nationalist stage-managing of the Sevillian-Andalusian images took place on several representational systems, among which the film industry played an important role. Since the Spanish film industry consolidated during the 1940s, it was by this time that the representations of Seville were fixed in

audiovisual media (cf. Delgado, 1995). Comparing these images to those that were circulating within other representational systems, we can hardly see any semantic differences. The folkloristic image of a cheerful Seville and Andalusia with vivid traditions was distributed among a national audience in order to cover up the hard realities after the civil war (ibid.). The monuments and the rural appeal of the city served as pertinent backgrounds for adventure movies and historical films, as well as for popularizing stories that idealized the conservative and anti-bourgeois dream of humble and simple life (ibid.). Thus, also the movie industry reproduced the exactly similar narratives of the ingenious singer, the sensual dancer, the daring bull-fighter or the humble priest, scenes of the Feria, the Semana Santa and a vivid street life. The folklorized representations were withdrawn from their social realities and stage-managed as national symbols to unite the country and provide a confident impression to an international audience (ibid.).

Cultural Economies and Effects of Localization

The political, economic and cultural opening of Spain after 1975 had stimulating effects on urban imagineering in Seville. Two factors played a major role in this process. First, the political consolidation of Andalusia as an autonomous region in 1980 was accompanied by a revival of regional and local symbols that followed the established folklorizing patterns. For instance, the sociologist Gerhard Steingress has shown how Flamenco music and dance has been and is interpreted from both right and left wings as manifestations of an «Andalusian mindset» (Steingress, 2006, pp. 120-140). This ‘mindset’, which is commonly characterized as humble, convivial, lively, impassioned and sincere, is also meant to be found in other ‘popular’ phenomena like the honorations of the Madonna, the pilgrimages, and the rural fairs (ibid.). Seville, being the main cultural centre of Andalusia, had been serving as a source for ‘Andalusian images’ for a long time (see Moreno, 2008). Now, as the regional capital, and fulfilling ideological functions in a very explicit way (Fox, 1974, p. 32), identificatory elements referring to a folklorized Sevillian-Andalusian identity are administrated, politicized and stage-managed both inside and outside the city boundaries. Apart from powerful inscriptions in urban space (memorials to singers and dancers, commemorations and anniversaries, restorations of Regionalismo architecture) it is important to mention the staging of the city within regional mass media (through interviews and shows with singers and dancers or through coverage of local events and celebrations, for instance). The regional and local radio and television stations are vastly controlled by the Andalusian government (cf. Guerrero, 1999). Following the literary critic Ana Sofía Pérez-Bustamante (1992), the programs distributed by these stations promote the popular-folkloristic motifs more effectively than any other representational system before.

A second factor to explain the intensification of urban imagineering after the dictatorship is the transformation of economic and social structures. With the political and economic opening of Spain, local structures of production became less important in Seville, whereas cultural capital in its material form (architecture, parks, environment, etc.) and its immaterial form (‘local’ practices and rituals, ways of using urban space, creative resources, etc.) gained significance. This is a general tendency of urban developments in Europe during the last third of the twentieth century (Reckwitz, 2009). The increasing dematerialisation of the economic base provoked cities (which means, their political, economic and social leaders) to economize their cultural capital and to see themselves «in terms of ‘culture» (ibid., p. 2).

In Seville, which transformed directly from an agrarian-artisan economy into a service-providing economy, tourism could extend its position significantly. It is evident that within cities which largely depend on economies of tourism, urban self-performance and imagineering are crucial devices for economic growth. Consequently, today, the Sevillian imaginary is reproduced in every street corner, especially in the old town. We stumble across its references on huge posters and screens, in shop windows and restaurant decorations, and in the display of postcards and local souvenirs on pedestrian ways. Historical motifs, the traditions of Flamenco and bull-fight, the animated life in bars and streets, and the vivid Catholic traditions are translated into simple images, which inscribe the urban space with meaning and sell the city as a stereotyped dream.

The cultural dynamics of twentieth and twenty-first-century tourism has changed the quantitative and mediatic dimensions of urban self-staging¹⁵, but, as we have seen, the «culturalization of the urban surface» (Lindner & Musner, 2005, pp. 26-27) is in no way a recent phenomenon in Seville. The primary subjects of current tourist campaigns, such as the Semana Santa, the Feria or selected architectural features, correspond with elements of an urban imaginary that has been fixed in various historical and functional contexts since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is also important to note that the images promoted by both local and translocal tourist agents do not differ significantly from the back stage imaginaries of the population. They rather constitute points of identification also for the city's inhabitants, although, certainly, their approaches to these representations are much more differentiated, biographical and intimist. We can witness this in countless declarations of local identification and pride encoded in songs, pictures, everyday narratives and autobiographies that reconstruct Seville and its enigmatic referents as objects of pleasure. The anthropologist Juan Agudo has shown in 2000 that the social networks of the Sevillians are still built around the same local topics, such as the Semana Santa, football,¹⁶ the Feria, Flamenco and other music forms with local imprint, and that the Semana Santa and Feria continue to be the most significant rituals to «reproduce emotions of belonging to the Sevillian collective» (Agudo Torrico, 2000, p. 690; see also Schwab, 2013, pp. 142-162). Hence, it would not be appropriate to apply the usual criticism of tourism as symbolic exploitation and subjugation (cf. Moreno, 2003; Römhild, 1994)¹⁷, although I do not deny that spatial representations are products of power relations¹⁸. The touristic imaginary of Seville is neither to be evaluated as an artificial simulation of a globalized industry, nor can it be separated from local or regional forms of perceiving, using and representing the city (see also Salazar, 2012). The identitary significance of the urban imaginary on a local level also becomes evident by the fact that, apart from tourism, many other economic branches refer to the transmitted image-bank. Posters in the dance club, porcelain kitsch in the bar or photographs in the copy shop, the taxi, or the supermarket frequently refer to the Sevillian Madonnas and images of Christ or locally known figures of the music and bull-fight milieus. Service-providers and retailers (in the old town as well as on the urban periphery) use the same local referents to connect products with 'homey' attributes and to attract the attention of consumers¹⁹, and thereby contribute to the accumulation and densification of local textures.

The commercial use of local images is deeply connected to tendencies of place-making and localization (cf. Molotch, 1998). Due to the internationalization of Spain after Franco's death and the rise of new media technologies, the Sevillian population very suddenly was confronted with images of differing lifestyles. When Seville held the world fair in 1992, the city became part of the national rapid train network and obtained an international airport. With the Metropol Parasol (finished in 2011) and the Torre Pelli (finished in 2015) the city obtained extravagant architectures that are interpreted as challenges to traditional urban aesthetics (Maya Rodríguez & Hernández Rodríguez, 2013). Furthermore, the suburban sprawl as well as gentrification processes have affected large parts of the inner city and destroyed the congruence of social activity and place. These and other factors have contributed to a radical change of economic, spatial, cultural, and social structures. The increasing simultaneity of the 'local' and the 'global', the 'traditional' and the 'modern', and the experience of de-traditionalization and de-territorialization

¹⁵ For instance, there are additional media involved in promoting the city's originality, and, due to increasing interdependencies between self-marketing cities, there is an internationalization of the methods of representation (Reckwitz, 2009).

¹⁶ Rufino Acosta Naranjo (2019) has recently shown how the presence of two important clubs in Seville constantly produces practices and discourses of local identification. On the significance of football with regard the power of local identity in Seville see also Schwab (2013, pp. 144-143).

¹⁷ On the contrary, there are many situations in Seville, for instance during the celebrations of the Feria and the Semana Santa, where tourists are excluded from local environments and the local population clearly regulates the relations between travelers and inhabitants.

¹⁸ I suggest to consider the folkloristic imaginary of Seville as an effect of specific inter-class-relationships, which over long periods of time were characterized by marked agrarian and artisan structures (see Schwab, 2013, pp. 184 ff.).

¹⁹ See <http://josefabarrera.es/index.php/moda-flamenca-sevilla/trajes-de-flamenca-sevilla>; <http://www.ceramica-agonzalez.com>; <http://www.isabelparente.com/>

seem to provide a more potent context of imagineering than all the others before. Local festivities are declared as 'typical' and fraternities considered as 'museums', and it is not surprising when the author Ismael Yebra tells that in his childhood there were no Semana Santa classes and the bars were not constantly occupied by Semana-Santa-meetings (Yebra Sotillo, 2007). The proud display of local particularities as 'familiar' and 'natural' manifestations strengthens territorial identification and brings historical continuity into the present, and it refers to the same images of the 'popular' and the 'exotic' Seville, which had been formed as local referents in the nineteenth century. Considered as 'folkloristic' performances by many critics (*ibid.*, p. 17; León, 2003, p. 119), such seemingly decontextualized stagings of 'local culture' are clear manifestations of (re-)localization and enhance the inscription of urban space and discourse with 'Sevillian' representations (see Molotch, 1998, p. 143)²⁰.

Conclusion: Social Patterns and the Persistence of Local Images

The case of Seville shows that urban place-making is by no means a phenomenon that evolved in the context of postmodern societies²¹. The image-bank of the city has been created and remained relatively consistent over the last two centuries. It was fixed under specific historical circumstances and social configurations, all of which contributed to the consolidation of the representations of the 'traditional', 'exotic', and 'popular' city until today. Concomitant with the political and economic opening of the country during the 1970s, altering macro-contexts and late modern overlapping have formed a novel context of imagineering, where processes of localization and touristification have proven important determinants.

If we consider Seville as an encoded space, where past conditions and processes still deploy their forces, we can discern its enduring regional orientation and its particular economic development as decisive factors for the persistence and vitality of the urban imaginary. During many centuries, apart from the short adventure as the gateway to the Americas, Seville functioned as a place of small-scale production, as a distribution centre for its hinterland and as residential seat for the agrarian aristocracy and bourgeoisie (Bernal, 1995). These groups constituted the top of the social hierarchy and were never replaced by, for instance, a powerful industrial or financial bourgeoisie (*ibid.*). As the principal 'boosters' of the Sevillian imaginary, the agrarian oligarchy and the powerful fraternities enduringly propagated the agrarian, Catholic, and provincial imprint of the city. Seville's social and cultural arrangements were effectively reinforced and legitimized during the Franquist regime. When the country opened in 1975, the conflict between 'local' structures and representations and forces of globalization was far more noticeable than in other places, such as Madrid or port towns like Barcelone or Málaga, and contributed significantly to the needs of cultural orientation, self-assertion and (re-)localization.

If we look at urban imaginaries in connection to socio-spatial settings that have evolved over time, we might find explications about their durability and their functioning in different contexts on both local and translocal levels. To conceptually approach a city as an accumulated socio-material-symbolic figuration

²⁰ Folkloristic stagings in diverse contexts of popular culture (festivals, food, music, etc.) are often interpreted as a form of postmodern eclecticism: «The popular, decontextualized, obscenely hybridized, has become chic» (Pérez-Bustamante, 1992, p. 161), Ana Pérez-Bustamante writes referring to late twentieth-century popular culture in Spain. With regard to Seville, however, this playing around with local references is often accompanied by essentialist elements. This effect can be attributed to an inferior position of Seville and Andalusia in connection to a national and international ('Western') hierarchy of cities and regions according to economic standards (see Schwab, 2013, pp. 247-256). Essentialist claims become evident, when hegemonic interpretations and regulations coming from Madrid or Brussels are contested with the evocation of a 'Sevillian' character or in the social and spatial exclusion of migrants and even 'devious' Sevillians. Some of these 'deviants' have founded an activist group (Iniciativa Sevilla Abierta) to stand up for a more open, less orthodox and less provincial city. Nevertheless, such propagations of a liberal-minded and cosmopolitan city don't weaken the hegemonic images. Rather, by referring to the 'old-fashioned', 'provincial', and 'conservative' imaginary, they constantly promote its accentuation (see Schwab, 2015). Hence, this dichotomous ideological structure forms another context of accumulation of the established local images.

²¹ On recent processes of theming spaces see, e.g., Lew (2017).

helps to determine how historical struggles impinge upon a city's present and provides new approaches to evaluate policies of city branding, urbanistic planning or participatory politics (cf. Bianchini, 2006). A city, in this view, is not functional entity that is arbitrarily mouldable, but a semantically inscribed socio-material environment, which forms the background of a significant range of practices and orientations of its population.

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