

Research Article

# Urban transformations and tourist impact of events. The Holy Week in Seville

## Transformaciones urbanas e impacto turístico de los eventos. La Semana Santa en Sevilla

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Events can have a deep and long-term impact in urban transformations, due to the effects in the urban landscape and the reinforcement of urban services. In addition, tourist perceptions of urban destinations are significantly affected by their experience of events. **Methodology:** The objective is to analyse the impact of the Holy Week in Seville in terms of urban presence and visitor perceptions. A mixed methodology is applied involving questionnaires to visitors, spatial analysis of reinforced urban services, routes and movement of attendees, registration of related activities, and analysis of public policy documents. **Results:** There is a relatively low visit to heritage sites and tourist attractions during Holy Week, mainly because most tourists repeat the visit to the event. Attendees show a great satisfaction with all aspects related to the event in general, especially those who live in the city

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and who come from abroad. **Discussion:** The key aspects to improve are mobility and the visit to other resources apart from the event. **Conclusions:** The Holy Week is an important event in terms of the number of visitors, economic impact, and civic pride, and improving the quality of urban services is the key to ensuring tourists and residents satisfaction.

**Keywords:** urbanism; events; festivals; tourism; historic city; public policy; services; urban landscape.

## Resumen

**Introducción:** Los eventos pueden causar un impacto profundo en transformaciones urbanísticas, debido a los efectos en el paisaje urbano y al refuerzo de los servicios urbanos. Además, impactan en la percepción de los turistas sobre los destinos urbanos. **Metodología:** El objetivo es analizar el impacto de la Semana Santa de Sevilla en cuanto a presencia urbana y percepción de los visitantes. La metodología incluye cuestionarios a visitantes, análisis espacial de servicios urbanos reforzados, recorridos y movimiento de asistentes, registro de actividades relacionadas y análisis de documentos de políticas públicas. **Resultados:** Existe una visita relativamente baja a sitios patrimoniales y atractivos turísticos durante la Semana Santa, principalmente porque la mayoría de los turistas repiten visita al evento. Los asistentes muestran una gran satisfacción con todos los aspectos relacionados con el evento en general, especialmente los que viven en la ciudad y los que vienen del extranjero. **Discusión:** Los aspectos clave a mejorar son la movilidad y la visita a otros recursos. **Conclusiones:** La Semana Santa es muy importante en términos de número de visitantes, impacto económico y orgullo cívico, y mejorar y mantener la calidad de los servicios urbanos es clave para garantizar la satisfacción de turistas y residentes.

**Palabras clave:** urbanismo; eventos; festivales; turismo; ciudad histórica; política pública; servicios; paisaje urbano.

## 1. Introduction

Events play a relevant role in many cities nowadays. They can range from small local festivals to large-scale international sports competitions, expositions, and religious celebrations, among others. They can be hosted just once or take place on a regular basis, normally annually. Events can contribute in many ways to the cities hosting them, both positively and negatively.

The objectives of this research are to analyse the urban impact of the Holy Week, one of the major annual events in Seville (Andalusia, Spain). The aspects analysed are visitor perceptions of the event, internal and external mobility, visit to other heritage resources and tourist attractions, reinforced services, changes in public landscape, and diversity of related activities.

### 1.1. Urban impact of events

Some of the main urban impacts of events are related to urban regeneration, urban landscape and reinforcement of certain urban services. Concerning urban regeneration, events often foster the revitalisation of rundown neighbourhoods thanks to investments in infrastructure, cultural facilities, and the public space; thus, improving the city's image (Smith, 2012).

For example, the Olympic Games involve a complete transformation of vast urban areas, including new public transport, housing, parks and cultural and social amenities (Barrera-Fernández, 2017; Gold, & Gold, 2017). City marketing and city branding are also benefited by events, and the positive impact starts since the bidding phase (Barrera-Fernández et al., 2020).

However, events can also be a leading force in fostering gentrification and the replacement of land uses (Porter, & Shaw, 2009). Furthermore, the focus on short-term improvements can leave behind long-term planning needs (Essex, & Chalkley, 2004).

Events, no matter their size, also have an impact in the urban landscape, which lasts normally only during the event and the preparation phase. The improved public realm has a positive impact in the city's perception by residents and tourists alike. Some areas change their image in the long-term, especially those transformed to host major events, resulting in new vibrant and cosmopolitan neighbourhoods (Cashman, 2002).

Urban design and architecture have a leading role in showcasing the values of the event and can leave a lasting legacy, influencing the transformation of other areas after the event is hosted. Sustainability, new technologies and cutting-edge designs are central aspects of these interventions (Wu, 2010). The dialogue with built heritage is a major issue in urban landscape interventions brought by events, ranging from conservation and restoration to complete loss and replacement of monuments and traditional buildings and urban spaces.

Hosting events needs the reinforcement of some urban services, including mobility, health, and security, among others. Public transport is critical because of the large crowds gathering in a very limited space for a short time. Improvements in this sense are normally related to an increase in transport services or the building of new infrastructures in the case of large events (Cornelissen, 2011).

Safety and security are also crucial because of the capacity of attraction of large number of attendees and the significance of the event for the city's reputation. Other services needing reinforcement include cleaning and waste management, which involve a significant planning ahead the event. These enhancements entail an extra cost for the local administration, which may divert funds from other needs (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003) and can cause an extra financial burden in the long term (Baade, & Matheson, 2016).

### ***1.2. The Holy Week in Seville***

This research is focused on the Holy Week in Seville. It consists of the procession of pasos (floats) with lifelike sculptures. The processions are organised by *hermandades* (brotherhoods), called *cofradías* when they parade in Holy Week, whose members carry the floats and accompany them.

Music bands join many of the processions and some of them are silent. Each procession follows a designated route from their churches to the Cathedral and back, but they all must accomplish walking through the *carrera oficial* (official route) between the squares of La Campana and Virgen de los Reyes and entering the Cathedral. In the sides of the official route there are seating areas reserved for title holders.

This last aspect is regularly criticised because it prevents public view of the brotherhoods, it somehow entails a temporary privatisation of the public space, and it is perceived as contributing to commodification of the event (Moreno, 2013).

As elsewhere, Holy Week in Seville is celebrated in the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. However, the general calendar has some special particularities in Seville. On the early morning between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday there is another set of processions called *La Madrugá*, being the most popular ones.

Some brotherhoods parade on Friday and Saturday before Palm Sunday (*Viernes de Dolores* and *Sábado de Pasión*) out of the official route. In 2023, there was an extraordinary set of processions on Holy Saturday apart from the traditional ones to commemorate the 775th anniversary of the reestablishment of Christian worship in Seville, called *Santo Entierro Grande*. It was made up of 15 brotherhoods, which that year paraded twice, on their traditional day and on Saturday.

Apart from processions, other activities taking place are masses, exhibitions, proclamations, music concerts, rehearsals, *mudás* and *traslados* (move of floats and sculptures to their home church or brotherhood house), *pregones* and *proemios* (speeches) and visit to temples, among others.

A growing number of activities are carried out the days before Holy Week and all year round, including extraordinary processions, which makes the calendar of events to increasingly extend beyond the officially designated dates.

As a result of this increase, religious activities account nowadays for half of all cultural and sports street events in the city (Macías, 2017), with an average of nearly two processions per day (Lamprea, 2023).

The Holy Week in Seville is a very lively tradition nowadays; it is an expression of collective belonging which for several people implies a sense of pride and commitment that exceeds the annual event and mark their personality. Its growing popularity contrasts to the general decline in religious feelings in Andalusia and it can be explained as a reinforcement of local identity in the context of globalization (Moreno, 1997; Díaz, 2008).

Apart from the religious meaning, the Holy Week in Seville implies many other sociocultural aspects. Each procession is traditionally associated to a neighbourhood or social group and the procession is a moment of showing pride and social ties. The internal organisation of the brotherhoods is a representation of class and social hierarchy in the local society.

The role of women has traditionally been restricted to parading with the mantilla and in preparatory tasks (Moreno, 1999), although in recent decades women have started to participate in the parades and music bands. However, they are not yet allowed to be *costaleros* (float bearers).

In addition, the Holy Week in Seville has traditionally served as a space for participation and expression of sexual and gender minorities, especially in historical periods when these identities were persecuted (Cáceres, & Valcuende del Río, 2014; Sánchez-López et al., 2013). Furthermore, the Holy Week is a main tourist attraction in the city, a key aspect for this research.

From an events tourism point of view, the Holy Week in Seville is one of the most relevant traditional events in the local and national context in terms of number of visitors and attraction to international travellers.

In its 2023 edition, average hotel occupancy rate was 80% and more than 90% between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, which include *La Madrugá*. 2.5 million attendees were counted by the automatic monitoring stations, more than 500,000 in *La Madrugá*. Foreign visitors were mostly from UK and USA (Seville City Council, 2023d; Canovaca, 2023).

The 2024 edition was exceptional because it rained most of the week, forcing to cancel most of the processions and having a negative impact in the number of visitors to the city and attendees to the event.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Application of a questionnaire

Among quantitative methods in event studies, the Event Experience Scale (EES) stands out to address the complexity and diversity of experiences at different kinds of events. The EES measures various dimensions of event experience, including affective engagement, cognitive engagement, social interaction, novelty and memorability.

It was first established by Geus, Richards and Toepoel (2016) and implemented in events worldwide (Barrera-Fernández, & Hernández-Escampa, 2017; Coetzee, & Pourfakhimi, 2019; Marques et al., 2021). The questionnaire was specifically adapted to this case study. It was an online survey, answered by mobile phone using a QR code.

The population for the study were audiences during Holy Week. Visitors were surveyed in person at the event itself, after the processions started and while they were waiting for the following ones to arrive. Pilot surveys were conducted to ensure the legibility and comprehension of the questions.

It had two versions, one in English and one in Spanish. The sample was made of 219 people, in line with previous samples where EES has been applied (Al-Azzam et al., 2022; Barrera-Fernández, & Hernández-Escampa, 2019; Kajdanek, 2021; Richards, 2020).

**Table 1.**

*Study sample composition*

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Man	108	49.3
	Woman	103	47.0
	Other	5	2.3
<b>Age</b>	19 or less	25	11.4
	Between 20 and 29	77	35.2
	Between 30 and 39	49	22.4
	Between 40 and 49	39	17.8
	Between 50 and 59	26	11.9
<b>Place of residence</b>	Seville	89	40.6
	A town/city near Seville	35	16.0
	Another place in Andalusia	34	15.5
	Another place in Spain	15	6.8
	Another country	43	19.6

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The questionnaire had three sections. Section 1 included multiple-choice questions about the visitor profile and their visit. Section 2 included the 18 original EES statements (Geus *et al.*, 2016; Richards, 2020) asking about attitudes towards the event and measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1–totally disagree, 5–totally agree). Section 3 included questions about satisfaction with the event and local services measured with a 5-point Likert scale (1–totally unsatisfactory, 5–totally satisfactory).

The relationships between variables in Section 1 were analysed applying a Pearson Chi square test. The reliability of the questions in sections 2 and 3 was tested using Cronbach's alpha. An ANOVA analysis was performed between the variables in the three sections.

## **2.2. Spatial analysis**

Firstly, we mapped all the brotherhood routes, which are the core activities of the Holy Week in Seville. Secondly, we identified key policies and services created or adapted specifically for this event and having urban presence and reflected in public policy documents (Seville City Council, 2023a; 2023b; 2023c). Finally, topics were classified into four categories and represented in maps using GIS. The categories are:

- Brotherhood routes. It comprised the routes followed by the brotherhoods from and to their home churches, including the ones walking the official route and entering the Cathedral from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, the ones walking in their neighbourhoods on the previous Friday and Saturday (*Viernes de Dolores* and *Sábado de Pasión*) and the extraordinary processions on Holy Saturday 2023 (*Santo Entierro Grande*).
- Mobility. It comprised temporary diversions and adaptations related to transport, including pedestrianised streets, pedestrian crossings, bike parking removal, diverted horse carriage routes, bus lines starting stops, tram stops, metro stations, taxi ranks, vehicle sharing and vehicle-for-hire companies parking, scooter parking, car parking, motorcycle parking, traffic control points, traffic totally or partially banned, private traffic diversion, and loading and unloading spaces.
- Health, safety, security, and cleaning. It comprised temporary reinforcement of these services, including evacuation routes, accessible areas or accessible seating, float bearers' attention point, firefighting post, health emergency post, police post, drone monitored area, emergency coordination centre, temporary litter bins, baby trolley parking, lactation posts, temporary toilets, "caution, wax on the pavement" signals, and areas where portable chairs were banned.

## **2.3. Direct observation**

It was useful to confirm the unfolding of the policies mentioned above. In addition, it served to detect other urban impacts related to the event, such as decoration of balconies and enhanced gardening. They were mostly related to improvements in the urban landscape. It was developed the week before Holy Week and during the event along the official route, nearby areas, main streets, squares, home churches, and points of access to the city centre.

## **2.4. Registration of activities related to the event**

Brotherhoods and Holy Week related activities were registered and classified for one month before the start of the event, during the event, and one month later, to assess their variety and time distribution. The main source of information was *Agenda Cofrade* (Brotherhoods' Calendar).



### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Results of the questionnaire

From the answers to Section 1 of the questionnaire, some key facts about the attendee profile and their visit were extracted. Among the 19.6% of those who came from another country, 5.5% were from France and almost the rest of the tourists came from different countries in Europe, with those who came from another country in the world being very insignificant.

Among those who do not live in the city, 19.6% stayed two days in Seville, and the percentages of visitors staying 2, 1 and 0 nights were similar, between 10.0% and 13.7%. Those who decided to overnight in Seville did it in tourist apartments (19.2%), with friends or relatives (11.4%), and 10.5% in hotels. Tourists arrived preferably by plane (18.7%), car (14.2%), and train (12.8%). About half of the sample (49.8%) moved around Seville on foot only and the rest of them combined walking with public or private transport.

Almost half of those surveyed, 42.9%, had previously planned the places to visit in Seville based on their own knowledge. Apart from the event itself, 12.3% of respondents visited or wanted to visit María Luisa Park and Plaza de España, 11% nothing at all, and 10% Torre Sevilla viewpoint. Outside the city, the respondents did not intend to visit other emblematic places (76.7%), such as Italica Roman ruins, Carmona, or Doñana National Park.

**Table 2.**

*Summary of the Section 1. Profile of the predominant visitor in the study sample*

<b>I am</b>	Man (49.3%)
<b>Age</b>	Between 20 and 29 years old (35.2%)
<b>I live in</b>	Seville (40.6%)
<b>How many nights are you staying in the city</b>	2 nights (19.6%)
<b>Where are you staying?</b>	Tourist apartment (19.2%)
<b>How did you arrive to Seville?</b>	Plane (18.7%)
<b>How do you move in Seville?</b>	Walking only (49.8%)
<b>How do you guide yourself in Seville?</b>	42.9% own knowledge from previous visits
<b>Visit to places in Seville</b>	12.3% María Luisa Park and Plaza de España
<b>Visit to places out of Seville</b>	Nothing (76.7%)

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The Pearson Chi square test was carried out for variables in Section 1. A 95% confidence coefficient was used, so the significance level is 5% (0.05). As the following Asymptotics obtained for the following variables are less than 0.05, we accept the hypothesis that says that there is a relationship between the variables. From these relationships between variables, we highlight the following key facts:

- 50% of men and 53.4% of women move on foot only.
- 45.4% of men and 39.8% of women find their way around Seville based just on their own knowledge of previous visits.
- All age groups mostly reside in Seville, highlighting the group of 40 to 49 years (56.4%) and 50 to 59 years (46.2%).

- All age groups mostly move around Seville walking, highlighting those between 40-49 years (56.4%), 20-29 years (53.2%), and between 50-59 years (50%).
- All age groups mostly orient themselves around Seville based just on their own knowledge of previous visits, with young people under 19 standing out (52%).
- Those who live near Seville stay one night (75%), those who live in another country stay two nights (53.5%), and those who come from another part of Spain, three nights (46.7%).
- Those who come from another country mostly stay in tourist apartments (51.2%) and those who live elsewhere in Andalusia stay with friends or relatives (52.9%).
- Those who come from another country mostly arrive to the city by plane (86%) and those who live elsewhere in Spain arrive by train (53.3%).
- All tourists, regardless of where they live, move around Seville on foot. Those who live elsewhere in Spain are the ones who walk the most (73.3%), followed by those from another place in Andalusia (67.6%).
- Those who live elsewhere in Spain (66.7%) ask locals to find their way around the city, and those who live near Seville (62.9%) are guided by their own knowledge.

**Table 3.**

*Relationships between variables in Section 1 that had a significant result*

Variables	Pearson Chi square test		
	Value	df	As. Sig.
I am *I live in	127.223	15	0.001
I am * How do you move in Seville?	157.679	9	0.001
I am * How do you guide yourself in Seville?	154.03	8	0.001
Age * I live in	35.034	5	0.001
Age * How do you move in Seville	61.662	6	0.000
Age * How do you guide yourself in Seville?	22.223	5	0.003
I live in: * If you don't live in Seville, how many nights are you staying in the city	53.008	9	0.001
I live in: * If you don't live in Seville, where are you staying?	96.847	9	0.000
I live in: * How did you arrive to Seville?	100.442	12	0.002
I live in: * How do you move in Seville?	58.849	6	0.001
I live in: * How do you guide yourself in Seville?	73.080	5	0.004

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The reliability of the questions in sections 2 and 3 was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The alpha scores of 0.940 and 0.821 were indicative of internal consistency. Regarding attitudes during the event, all variables have an average of 3 forward; meaning attendees had a normal to good experience.

The item with the lowest result was "I was creative" and the one with the highest score was "I participated actively". With respect to satisfaction with the event and local services, all items are above 3, meaning they were very or highly satisfied in general. The item with the lowest result was traffic and the one with the highest score was tourist information.



**Table 4.***Cronbach's alpha in variables in sections 2 and 3*

		<b>Average</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
<b>Section 2. Attitudes toward the event</b>	I was excited	4.35	1.068
	I felt a sense of adventure	3.92	1.431
	I experienced intimacy	4.45	0.973
	I wanted to revive this after	4.38	1.085
	I got emotionally recharged	4.17	1.128
	I was interpreting things for myself	4.27	1.009
	I was aware of my own values	4.38	0.988
	I learned something	4.31	0.725
	I acquired new knowledge	4.02	1.150
	I reflected on my ideas and discussed with others	4.24	0.721
	I was thinking	3.85	1.440
	I was active	3.98	1.178
	I used my intellect	3.82	1.264
	I was creative	3.43	1.577
	I participated actively	4.53	0.747
	This event was different from others	4.51	0.748
	It was out of my normal life	4.47	0.757
	I thought that this event is unique	4.13	1.191
	<b>Average</b>	<b>4.0314</b>	<b>0.73823</b>
<b>Section 3. Satisfaction with the event and local services</b>	Schedule of parades and other activities	4.19	0.617
	Street cleaning	3.43	1.214
	Noise	3.64	1.417
	Conservation of heritage	4.61	0.568
	Tourist information	4.71	0.500
	Tourist guides	4.57	0.688
	Attention by service providers	4.38	0.681
	Language knowledge by service providers	3.84	1.315
	Signing	4.38	0.724
	Healthcare	4.05	0.941
	Security	4.31	0.922
	Value for money	3.73	0.531
	Accommodation	3.85	0.774
	Gastronomic offer	3.77	0.740
	Walkability	3.69	0.933
	Accessibility for people with reduced mobility	3.92	0.791
	Public transport	3.44	1.171
	Traffic	3.29	0.824
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.9646</b>	<b>0.46208</b>

**Source:** Own elaboration.

The ANOVA analysis between the variables in the three sections of the questionnaires raised relevant results, as follows:

**Table 5.**

*Key results of the ANOVA analysis of the variables in the three sections of the questionnaire*

	Less satisfied	More satisfied
<b>Section 2. Attitudes toward the event</b>	Those who live elsewhere in Andalusia and those who live near Seville	Those who come from another country
	Those who stay with family	Those who stay in hotels or tourist apartments
	Those who arrive by bus, metro, taxi and/or car	Those who arrive in Seville by plane
<b>Section 3. Satisfaction with the event and local services</b>	Those who live elsewhere in Andalusia and those who live near the city	Those who live in Seville
	Those who stay with family and friends	Those who stay in hostels or similar
	Those who arrive by bus, taxi and car	Those who arrive by plane

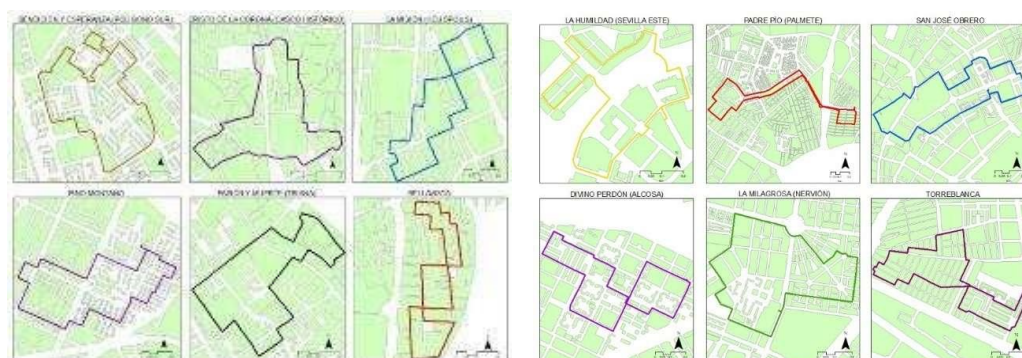
**Source:** Own elaboration.

### 3.2. Results of the spatial analysis

In relation to the routes followed by brotherhoods on Friday and Saturday before Holy Week, all districts of the city are represented, with a special concentration to the South and the East. They mostly take place in modern highly populated neighbourhoods. The processions last 5.6 hours in average on Friday and 7.7 hours on Saturday. There is only one procession in the city centre: Cristo de la Corona, which takes place on *Viernes de Dolores*.

**Figures 1 (left) and 2 (right).**

*Brotherhood routes on Viernes de Dolores (left) and Sábado de Pasión (right) on Friday and Saturday before Holy Week*



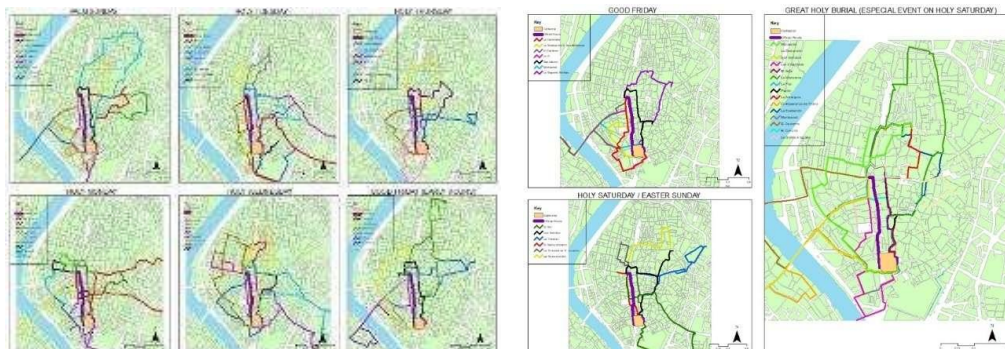
**Source:** Own elaboration.

All the processions from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday take place in the city centre, since they all walk along the official route and enter the Cathedral. Most of them have their mother church in the city centre itself, although some of them start in other neighbourhoods, namely in Triana (La Estrella, San Gonzalo, Esperanza de Triana, La O, and El Cachorro), Nervión (El Cautivo, San Benito, and La Sed), El Porvenir (La Paz and Santa Genoveva), Cerro del Águila (El Cerro), San Bernardo (San Bernardo), Los Remedios (Las Cigarreras), and San Pablo (San Pablo).

The processions last 7.2 hours in average on Palm Sunday, 7.8 hours on Monday, 7.3 hours on Tuesday, 7.2 hours on Wednesday, 6.2 hours on Thursday, 7.8 hours on *La Madrugá*, 7.0 hours on Friday, 7.9 hours on Saturday, 6.8 on *Santo Entierro Grande* (only in 2023), and 8 hours on Easter Sunday.

**Figures 3 (left) and 4 (right).**

*Brotherhood routes during the Holy Week*

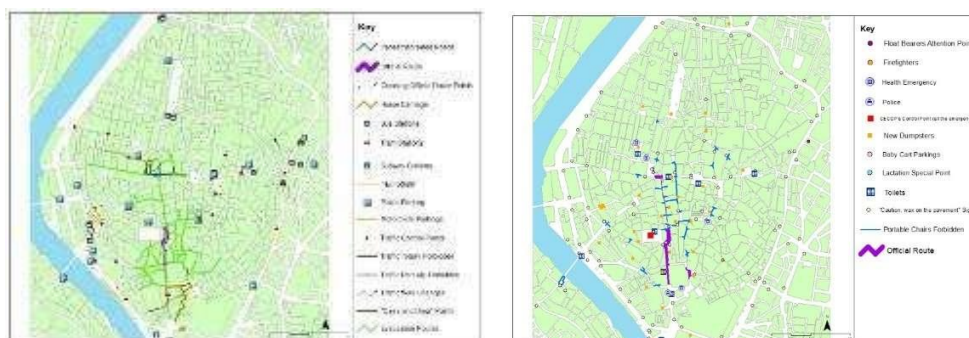


**Source:** Own elaboration.

Regarding reinforced services, the Holy Week implies a significant effort in managing large crowds of attendees in a very limited urban space characterised by relatively narrow streets, with its impact in traffic, waste management, security and other aspects. The following maps summarise the measures included in the analysed public policy documents, namely the Mobility Plan (Seville City Council, 2023a), the reinforcement and diversion of bus and tram services (Seville City Council, 2023b), and the reinforcement in cleaning (Seville City Council, 2023c).

**Figures 5 (left) and 6 (right).**

*Extraordinary measures related to mobility (left) and health, safety, security, and cleaning (right)*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

In relation to pedestrian mobility, some streets surrounding the official route are temporarily pedestrianised, and some pedestrian crossings are established along the official route between the seating spaces that are open only when processions stop.

In addition, a large area is designed as evacuation routes for the crowds. Concerning public services, traditional horse carriages are displaced from their parking in the Cathedral, bus stops are cancelled in the official route and other ones are established mostly in the outskirts of the city centre, the tram does not circulate after the Archive of the Indies, underground services are reinforced in frequency and schedule, and taxi ranks are also reinforced.

Regarding private traffic, the public parking is extended temporarily as well as motorcycle parking, most traffic is diverted in the core zone, and strict controls are established.

Concerning health, there is a post to attend float bearers, who make a severe physical effort carrying the heavy sculptures. There are also health emergency posts for the public in general, lactation points, and temporary toilets. In relation to safety, portable chairs and baby trolleys can turn into obstacles in crowds; to avoid it, portable chairs are banned in sensitive junctions and special parking is provided for trolleys.

Wax is spilt by the candles in all processions, resulting in a risk of falling and slipping for pedestrians and vehicles; thus, there are signs noting this all around the area. Regarding security, the police, firefighters and the coordinated emergency system have special posts for the event. Finally, in relation to cleaning, new dumpsters are located, and the cleaning services reinforce their shifts during the event.

### ***3.3. Results of the direct observation***

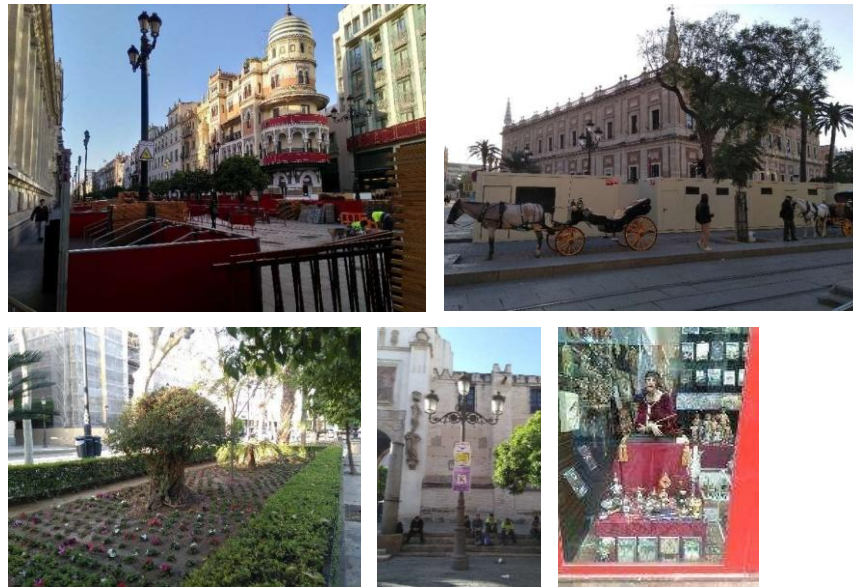
Direct observation was useful to detect how the reinforced services included in the public policy documents were implemented in the public realm. In addition, it served to highlight changes in the urban landscape, most of them are spontaneous and are not included in official planning. The initiatives are developed by residents, businesses and the public administration in different combinations.

The main changes detected before the event were the installation of the seating spaces, railings and pedestrian crossings, improved gardening, placement of emergency posts, toilets, signs, ramps and the other measures mentioned above, decoration of balconies, and decoration of shop windows. After the Holy Week, most of the mentioned aspects are removed. The only concern is the accumulation of wax in the pavement, which can last weeks to be completely removed.



**Figures 7 (above left), 8 (above right), 9 (below left), 10 (above centre), and 11 (above right).**

*Changes in the urban landscape: seating spaces (above left), emergency posts and toilets (above right), gardening (below left), safety signs (below centre), shop windows (below right)*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

### **3.4. Results of the registration of activities related to the event**

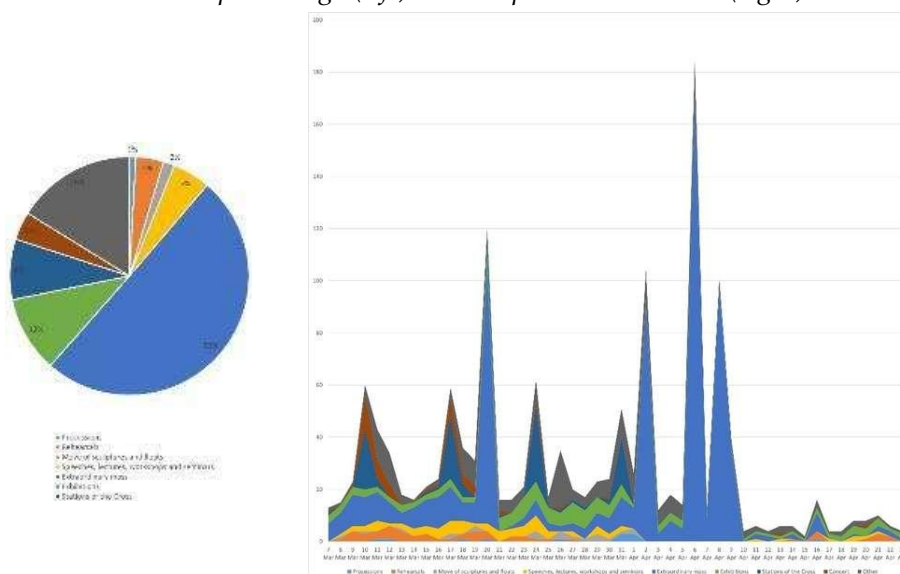
Apart from the processions, it was useful to register daily related activities to the Holy Week one month before, during, and one month after the event. As it is a religious event, the religious component of the activities stands out, together with social, academic, and artistic components. In summary, extraordinary masses account for half of the activities, followed by exhibitions and representations of the Stations of the Cross (*Via Crucis*).

Regarding the temporal distribution of related activities, in 2023 extraordinary masses concentrated in the key religious days, namely St. Joseph (19<sup>th</sup> of March), Palm Sunday (2<sup>nd</sup> of April), Maundy Thursday (6<sup>th</sup> of April), and Easter Sunday (9<sup>th</sup> of April). Before Holy Week, other activities are diverse and numerous: rehearses and speeches are constant, move of floats and exhibitions concentrate when the event approaches, concerts are usually performed earlier, and Stations of the Cross are performed mostly on the Fridays of Lent (*Viernes de Cuaresma*).

During Holy Week, the focus is on the processions, other activities are basically limited to extraordinary masses on key dates. After the event, the number of related activities is significantly lower, although they are still quite varied.

**Figures 12 (left) and 13 (right).**

*Activities related to the event: percentage (left) and temporal distribution (right)*



**Source:** Own elaboration.

## 4. Discussion

Regarding the tourists' experience, perception and attitudes, we can highlight that most visitors are excursionists, who, therefore, do not feel like tourists and have not answered all the questions related to the stay and mobility. Being people who know the place because they have visited it on other occasions and because of the proximity to their home, they are not interested in visiting other attractions.

Those who do consider themselves tourists, approximately one fifth of those surveyed, arrived in Seville by plane, they move around on foot and have previously researched the places to visit. The experience is highly positive among all groups and those aspects that achieve greater satisfaction are tourist information, conservation of heritage, and tourist guides.

On the other hand, aspects with lowest satisfaction rates are related to mobility and cleaning, which in fact are subject to dedicated public policies, but still need more measures to be applied.

In relation to the routes followed by brotherhoods on Friday and Saturday before Holy Week, almost all take place in modern, highly dense districts, with a special concentration to the South and the East. This fact reflects that the Holy Week is an evolving tradition, where new processions are incorporated, and new brotherhoods are created.

Regarding the routes followed between Easter Sunday and Palm Sunday, most of the processions start and finish in the city centre and its surroundings and are the shortest ones. The longest ones, lasting more than 12 hours are San Pablo (from Polígono de San Pablo), Santa Genoveva (Tiro de Línea), El Cerro (Cerro del Águila), La Sed (Nervión), and Esperanza de Triana (Triana).



Concerning reinforced services, the City Council makes an extraordinary effort to minimise the negative impacts and to grant a safe event. The strategies are updated every year, including new technologies, for example, a recent incorporation was drone monitoring, very helpful to keep the Holy Week being a very safe event despite the large crowds, which contributes positively to the city's reputation.

Gender perspective is considered, for example through the installation of baby trolley parking and lactation points. Inclusion for people with reduced mobility is considered as well. Nevertheless, according to the surveys, accessibility, cleaning and mobility are still perceived relatively deficient; thus, it is crucial to incorporate more initiatives to improve them. All those aspects are related to overcrowding and environmental degradation, which tends to be a great issue of concern (Gössling, & Hall, 2006) in many events worldwide.

Direct observation allowed to assess the implementation of measures and to show that residents and companies also collaborate in the enhancement of the urban landscape, especially through decoration of balconies and shop windows, highlighting the transversal character of this event. In the case of the Holy Week of Seville, benefits would be distributed more evenly than in other events (Mills, & Rosentraub, 2013), because it takes place in the public space in the historic city, which hosts a large number and variety of shops, accommodation, and restaurants.

Furthermore, there is restricted access to seating, but the rest of the area is of free access, granting a relative participation of diverse social groups. The Holy Week does not imply the regeneration of a full urban area (Gold, & Gold, 2017), but it contributes to good maintenance and yearly enhancement of the area, from example, in a sort of long-term legacy and planning, opposite to common criticism to many events (Essex, & Chalkley, 2004).

The registration of parallel activities showed that most of them concentrate before the event, making evident the prior expectation, the long-time needed to prepare all the details, and the cooperative character of the event (Derrett, 2003). The number of activities drop after it, coinciding with the preparation of the other major event in the city, Seville Fair, which normally takes place around three weeks after Holy Week.

## 5. Conclusions

Events are increasingly seen to diversify the tourist offer and to become more competitive in terms of city marketing; however, they can add more pressure in already crowded urban areas, as city centres are in many cases. To maintain a sustainable balance between tourism and the needs of residents, it is important to consider their impact on public spaces, mobility, and the local character.

Annual traditional events, like the Holy Week in Seville, clearly differ from large exceptional international events like the Olympic Games or the European Capital of Culture in the fact that they do not entail a complete regeneration of a neglected neighbourhood or a vast investment in new infrastructures and facilities. Their main contribution is in keeping an urban area well maintained and regularly enhanced. In the case of events taking place in the historic city, as this case, they add character and vitality to these sectors.

The main practical implications of the research would be oriented to reinforcing those services perceived more negatively by respondents, which mostly relate to pedestrian mobility, accessibility for people with reduced mobility, public transport, private parking and congestion, and street cleaning.

All these topics are already treated in detail by local policies and the authors expect that they will be improved even more in the future.

A limitation of the study would be the focus on quantitative surveys; they could be completed with in-depth interviews in the future to collect more subtle perceptions by attendees. Interviews to public officials would also enrich the analysis of public policy documents. A future line of research would be applying this study to the other major event of the city, Seville Fair, and to other Holy Weeks in Andalusian cities and towns.

They share many features in common but reinforced services and urban impact might differ. This study focused on urban and tourist implications of the Holy Week, other perspectives of analysis include economy and social anthropology, covering aspects such as the event's religious and non-religious dimensions, traditions and new incorporations, inclusion of people from different origin, belief, class, gender and sexual orientation, among others.

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