Urban imaginaries and the renovation of the quarter of Santa Cruz (Seville, Spain).

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This paper is based on a case study which analyses the quarter of Santa Cruz of Seville (Spain) as one of the most visited sights of the city. It became an attractive place for tourists, not in the XIX century when romantic travelers published their many travel books and guides of the city, but in the second decade of the XX century, after a very significant urban renovation which transformed the landscape of the quarter. That process took place in a particular context influenced by an intense reflection about the ways of modernization of the city and by the first institutional politics regarding tourism in Spain.

After been rejected some urban plans which were expected to improve the conditions of the quarter by opening big streets, the area, between 1912 and 1920, was renovated in a less aggressive way that included actions such as painting the front of buildings and
urbanizing some open spaces. The process of general renovation sought to provide the quarter with a regionalist aesthetic which was well accepted by resident and tourist. In consequence, that urban remodeling was one of the first attempt to adapt a Spanish historic quarter to a stereotyped image designed to be attractive for tourists. The result was very successful because the remodeled quarter became a regional and national sign of a prototypical urban landscape and its image has been used for the following promotion of the city and the whole country.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Paula Saavedra is PhD student in Geography at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Spain). Her research examines how tourist imagery is important to cities and specifically her dissertation presents a case study focused on a particular neighbourhood located in the historic center of Seville (the quarter of Santa Cruz). She aims to analyze the imaginaries (projected and perceived images) of this place to understand how they influence people’s behaviours and the way they interact with the urban space. Her research methodology is qualitative and includes the interpretation of visual imagery, focus group and semi-structured interviews.