

Spanish cities as filming locations: analysis and spatial distribution

Las ciudades españolas filmadas en el cine:
análisis y distribución espacial

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Abstract

The main objective of this article is to show the spatial distribution of Spanish cities according to the degree of their cinematographic projection. For this purpose, a sample consisting of 178 feature films was selected. After viewing each of them, 3,071 exterior clips from these movies were geo-localized. Using this methodology has enabled us to circumvent the feature film as a

unit of analysis, and instead focus attention on the clips, understood as such as sequences shot in exteriors, with their precise duration and geo-localization. The article describes and differentiates between three large territorial areas for filming: the Autonomous Regions of Madrid, Spain's coastal cities, and Spain's interior cities, examining factors that explain the distribution of the shootings, whether geographic, cinematographic or administrative-economic. Information from the highest-rated movies reveals a group of Spanish cities with limited cinematographic dissemination, for which some recommendations are made for improving the projection of the city's image.

Key words: Spain; towns; cinema; shooting locations.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es el de mostrar la distribución espacial de las ciudades españolas atendiendo a su distinto grado de proyección cinematográfica. Para ello se ha seleccionado una muestra de 178 largometrajes. Tras su visionado, se han geolocalizado 3071 clips rodados en exteriores procedentes de estas películas. La metodología empleada ha permitido obviar al largometraje como unidad de análisis posibilitando centrar la atención en los clips, entendiendo por tales los fragmentos rodados en exteriores con una duración y geolocalización precisa. El trabajo diferencia y describe tres grandes territorios de filmación: la región de Madrid, las ciudades del litoral y la España interior, indagando en los factores explicativos de su distribución ya sean geográficos, cinematográficos o administrativo-económicos. La información procedente de las películas mejor valoradas evidencia la existencia de un conjunto de ciudades españolas con una limitada difusión cinematográfica, acerca de las cuales se establecen unas recomendaciones para una mejor proyección de su imagen.

Palabras clave: España; ciudades; cine; localizaciones de rodaje.

1 Introduction

Studies that link cinema and geography have been undertaken from three different branches- the new cultural geography, economic geography and the geography of tourism –each of them dealing with different aspects. Regarding the first of these, it was not until the 1980s that the new field of cultural geography began its progressive shift away from studies on the material components shaping landscapes to focus on their formal representation, that is, what we could call immaterial landscapes. Accordingly, the new cultural geography not only dwells on, as in the

past, landscape's formal expressions, but also encompasses how it is transmitted and disseminated, thereby fueling the spectator's imaginary (Cosgrove, 1984; Cosgrove & Jackson, 1987; Jackson, 1989). While important scholarly endeavors have long existed into the links between literature or painting and geography, at the end of the 20th century, studies examining the geographic space and landscape in cinema were still quite scant (Kennedy & Lukinbeal, 1997; Escher & Zimmerman, 2001; Lukinbeal, 2005). This lack of knowledge seems paradoxical considering the fact that audiovisual fiction has become the most effective instrument for disseminating images with geographic content among all types of social groups.

This late onset was due to the fact that these were studies located far from the discipline's central core of research topics, making up what has been referred to as "other geographies", that is, those identified as being "habitually little studied because of their intrinsic difficulty and accessibility, or because of an invisible, intangible, ephemeral or fleeing appearance" (Nogué & Romero, 2006, p. 11).

Notwithstanding, ever since the beginning of this century, a type of convergence is being produced between human geography and the disciplines grouped under the term "the humanities", which goes beyond the traditional relationship between geography and history. From the side of human geography we are witnessing a new focus on geographic impact—at the territorial as well as urban level—of any type of work or cultural event, in what Cosgrove termed the *cultural turn* (Cosgrove, 2011). As has been fittingly pointed out, this new cultural perspective of geography should not be in conflict with utilizing vast quantities of information and the techniques for processing it, characteristic of quantitative geography, to the point of prompting a quantitative turn in the new cultural geography (Barnett, 2004). Indeed, the study presented here is based on handling an extensive volume of information, initially unstructured as are feature-length film clips.

In the context of these epistemological changes that have affected cultural geography since the end of the 20th century, a relatively young specialization has taken shape (Lukinbeal & Zimmermann, 2006) where audiovisual images and the geographical space merge, which, since its beginnings, has presented a rich array of approaches and topics. Furthermore, it is a field of study where geography joins up with contributions from distinct disciplines: audiovisual communication studies, new techniques for cartographic representation, architecture, and urban marketing, among others, evidenced by the publication of other collective works coordinated by

authors from diverse academic backgrounds (Mottet, 1999; Lefebvre, 2006; Harper & Rayner, 2010).

Given the profound relationship between urban spaces and film narratives, where most of them take place, it is not surprising that there are a considerable number of research studies that, in the last years, examine this dual link. Undoubtedly, there is more extensive research along these lines than that corresponding to other geographical categories such as rural spaces and landscape. Film and the city involve a rich reciprocal connection not only as far as film production is concerned, but also regarding academic studies, including those of the Spanish ambit.

An in-depth review of the Spanish publications (in different formats, whether doctoral dissertations, monographs, book chapters, articles in journals, reports or video essays) on the link between the city and the cinema produces numerous results from different disciplines—geography, architecture, sociology, audiovisual communication studies, marketing, tourism, etc.—which, from different perspectives, have explored this subject. In recent years this scholarly output has notably increased, compared to a lower volume of published references before the 1990s. Although lagging a few years behind with respect to Anglo-Saxon countries and other European ones, such interest in the link between film and cities in Spain is in line with epistemological innovations in other disciplines—as is the case of geography—with audiovisual predominating in all fields, especially in leisure, compared to the written text or exclusively audio products. In addition, new technology formats enable movies and series to be viewed in a different way than what was usual in earlier decades.

The reasons are thus clear for this profusion of scholarly endeavors into the link between film and cities. However, at least in the Spanish sphere, these studies have been focused on very limited territories, without establishing a connection between them. Hence, we find in-depth research into the rise and development of cinematography (documentary and fiction) in certain Spanish cities, mainly from historians and cinematography experts, or which are even fostered by entities like film commissions or film offices. This is likewise the case for studies focused on the work of a given filmmaker whose movies have made an indelible mark on some cities. Additionally, further examination reveals work that, exclusively analyzing one movie, addresses the spatial aspect of its filming.

It is relatively simple to find monographs dedicated to the cinematographic representation of the world's principal urban areas. We can likewise consult generalist studies or compendiums, in which each chapter is dedicated to a given city (Dalmau & Galera, 2007; Mennel, 2008; Koeck

& Roberts, 2010; Camarero, 2013; García Gómez & Pavés, 2014). In monographs and in other formats, such as articles in specialized journals, there are myriad studies on metropolitan areas such as Madrid (Aertsen et al., 2019; Alfeo & Deltell, 2022), Barcelona (Caparrós, 2013; Osácar, 2013; Antoniazzi, 2020), Seville (Utrera, 1995), Valencia (Oltra, 2000), Valladolid (Martín, 2002), Granada (Lara & García, 2010) and Málaga (Ventajas, 2008; Reyes, 2022), as well as some smaller size cities like Benidorm (Sánchez Navas, 2016) and Torremolinos (García Moreno, 2017).

In other cases, there is research focusing on the degree to which the city and its inhabitants are featured in film genres like police/detective, social drama, migration, *quinqui* (petty thieves/delinquents) and queer. Lastly, intrinsic links have been observed between some directors and certain cities –making up widely known pairings such as Woody Allen-New York (De Miguel, 2022) and Pedro Almodovar-Madrid (Camarero, 2020)– which have been thoroughly examined in specialized literature.

This interest in the study of cinema set in the cities has translated into the search for ad hoc mapping solutions. The majority of contributions are aimed at capturing a moving image, including changes in focal length and spatial ellipses in the montage, characteristic of audiovisual productions, with procedures to enable a mapped representation (Caquard & Fiset, 2014). The mappings presented here do not take these latter issues into account. First, because this study does not seek to show audiovisual fiction in the city, in its interior locations, but rather the urban areas themselves that have been filmed within a territory. Secondly, because the study includes sequences or clips from different movies, using the filming seconds in exteriors as a main variable for the mapping.

In short, in the specialized literature we are able to find, on the one hand, studies on the cinematographic image that involves the territory of some countries, and on the other, those examining the image of certain cities projected onto the screen. Nevertheless, there is scant research that specifically delves into the internal distribution of scenes filmed in a city's interior.

In this vein, there is a lack of studies showing the differing degrees of representation for distinct cities in the same country, because, beyond the capitals and principal cities –like New York (Adell & Llavador, 2013), Paris (Kovacsics, 2013; Hueso, 2014), London (Sorensen, 1996; Hirsch & O'Rourke, 2017), Rome (D'Avino & Rumori, 2012) and Tokyo (Liotta, 2008; Thornbury,

2020)— it is no easy task to determine to what extent the rest of cities in these same countries are represented and what procedures can be used to compare them.¹

From our point of view, in what refers to Spain, this panorama resembles a puzzle with a few pieces that have yet to be put in place. We are in need of a general frame of reference that allows us to fit in these valuable individual contributions, and at the same time, one verifying the gaps still existing in the general panorama. The aim of this study is precisely to show the distribution of the group of Spanish cities, focusing on their representation in film, using academic approaches for this purpose and with reproducible results by other researchers, without delving into intraurban research on specific cities.

2 Explanatory framework

The city's link to audiovisual fiction is a vast topic, tackled by different disciplines. The function of the city in the creative process of any movie is multi-faceted. Diverse authors (Martínez, 2013; Gámir 2013) have established three aspects that serve as a guide for exploring this relationship. First, from a perspective close to economic geography, the city is contemplated as a hub where audiovisual production companies are concentrated. This concentration not only occurs in those urban areas better positioned for technological innovation, but also within them, in neighborhoods or areas, even forming authentic specialized clusters. Secondly, the city has been used simply as a stage or backdrop. If at the start its use was limited to filming on sets, like Hollywood, Cinecittà, Pinewood and Babelsberg, located on the outskirts of Los Angeles, Rome, London and Berlin, and today the object of film tours, they readily lent their buildings and structures, and their own urban morphologies to substitute their images for other cities in filmings. Finally, in an aspect closer to cultural geography and tourism geography, film shoots that take place in the same city where the narrative is developed constitute a powerful tool for

1 One of the most interesting exceptions to this assertion is the work of Christian B. Long, *Where is France in French Cinema, 1976-2013?* (Long, 2015), which includes narrative location maps in France (not of filming locations) based on a sample of French movies characterized by having been presented as a candidate for Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars (13 winners and 36 nominations) or feature films winning a Cesar for best movie. Although this author acknowledges that his sample is small, the results are interesting not only because of the most represented cities (which are not necessarily those filmed) such as Paris or Marseille, but also because of the limited presence of some areas such as Lyon, or the total absence of others, such as Corsica. More recently, the work *La "grande bellezza": thirty years of Italian set locations* (Aru & Capineri, 2021) was published. The study is based on a massive database of more than 5,000 Italian-set films from 1988 to 2016. In order to obtain more detailed information on filming locations, only film records which contained toponyms of specific filming locations were selected. This produced a list of 4,764 films with 764 distinct toponyms. According to that, the authors identified "filmogenic spots", which are spatial clusters of higher concentrations of film per location compared to the average value of the dataset.

projecting the city image to the outside world and reinforcing the self-identification of its citizens with their city (Lorente, 2016). In fact, several filmmakers have brought their own life experiences in the city to the screen, up to the point of establishing a strong link between the director and the city.

These three aspects –the city that generates audiovisual products, the city as a set that substitutes others, and the city that shows its own self– are all present when determining in what city a movie will be filmed.

There are various factors that can help explain the reasons for the distribution of filming locations in the territory, without any of them being solely determinant. Specialized literature coming from English-speaking countries since the end of the past century, has examined this subject (Storper, 1989; Elmer & Gasher, 2005; CEIDR, 2006; Beeton, 2008; Rhodes & Gorfinkel, 2011; Wallace 2012) and more recently, references in our country have also appeared (Rosado & Querol, 2006; Gámir, 2013).

Reducing the territorial scope to the cities, there are urban determinants that is, of a geographic nature; cinematographic, understood as those related to the action of filming; and finally, those of an administrative and economic type, linked to the promotion of cities by regional and local administrations. However, before examining each of them, it is necessary to clarify that the impact of these factors is quite variable depending on different circumstances.

In the first place, it is necessary to take into account the historic period: more than a century has passed since the appearance of the first work of audiovisual fiction. During its early beginnings and the development of national film productions, it is not surprising that there would be an initial concentration of film shoots in a country's most dynamic urban areas; cities whose production network guarantees that a film could be made (the presence of actors, filmmaking material, laboratories, ancillary services, etc.) Afterwards, once the audiovisual industry has become consolidated, film shoots spread out to other areas in the territory. This diffusion, very evident in the case of the North American film industry, even reached an international scale, outsourcing filming to other countries (*runaway productions*). Accordingly, in several European countries, after the 1950s, two dynamics existed which were complementary: that of the corresponding national film productions and those of the North American productions. In the case of foreign productions, overall conditions for safety are significant –a factor that is of importance in some countries, but not so in Spain– and the degree of accessibility and communication of the filming location with respect to the principal cities with international airline connections. A factor which,

in the 1950s and early 1960s, could explain the search for urban alternatives or rural areas close to Madrid or Barcelona —where the principal actors and the production crew stayed—, no longer has the importance that it did in the past, given the communication network, and airports with countless international connections. Notwithstanding, some film commissions continue to promote it as a factor to attract film shoots.²

The second aspect to consider relates to the film's budget. It is obvious that precisely in the early moments of the development of the Spanish film industry, based in Spain's principal cities, productions with a limited budget tended to concentrate their shootings in exteriors at a small number of locations, as well as limiting as much as possible having to move set material, actors, film crews, etc. In contrast, for big budget movies, economic factors propelled them toward outsourcing their film shoots. That was the case of the large North American productions that landed in our country at the end of the 1950's, taking into account the lower wages for extras and the need to locally reinvest profits from previous movies. At present, this economic factor materializes in getting tax exemptions from regional and local administrations for shooting in their territories.

Finally, the third aspect that adds an element of variability to the explanatory factors relates to the characteristics of the story being filmed. We refer here to those movies whose filming locations are partially conditioned by a script based on a previous novel or by being set in a given period of history.

Along with these aspects, three factors that influence the territorial distribution of filming locations in cities have been considered.

First, urban size has been considered by demographic volume. The size of the city is a favorable factor for diverse reasons. From the perspective of production, it is because of the variety of potential settings it contains and because of availability of all types of technicians and service companies to assist in the shoots. But also, from the narrative point of view because of the array of cultural products in these cities and because of the large number of stories whose scripts or original literary texts take place within them, and which are later, brought to the big screen; undoubtedly, if we focus on faithfulness to the script and the possible authenticity of the images, the most suitable option consists in shooting in exteriors of these same cities.

2 For example, the Madrid Film Office highlights six items for which the city should be chosen for a film shoot: industry, locations, incentives, safety, climate, and connectivity, specifying for the latter that there are over 200 direct flights to this city.

However, once pointed out the foregoing, the presence of differentiating features within these cities must be observed, specifically their architectural heritage, a factor closely linked to the city's cultural clout, particularly in ones that are mid-sized. In contrast to their size, this group contains an abundance of outstanding, well-preserved architectural heritage.³ Such heritage has converted them into ideal spaces for filming period-piece movies —especially those set in the Middle Age and in the Modern Age times. The prominent presence of singular architectural elements like castles, old city walls, Romanesque and Gothic churches, palaces, etc., provide films with a greater authenticity in their images than what could be obtained by recreating or scale modelling these same structures. In the case of Spain, we must include another consideration: the existence of numerous cities that conserve architectural heritage characteristic of Arab civilizations, which is not found in the rest of European countries. This feature invites substitution since it provides a much greater degree of authenticity to the filmed scene than what could be recreated in a studio.

Lastly, there are a series of factors inherent in shooting a movie that can facilitate, and as a consequence, considerably lower its cost. This is the case of panoramic shots which display the monumental heritage of a city, without any interruptions in the camera's field of vision, or facilities for shooting inside its monuments (courtyards or palatial rooms) without having to recreate them in the studio premises. There are also specific elements that are highly valued according to a given film and which solely can determine whether to go to one city or another to film: the nearby sea, the intensity and angle of natural light, or the existence of infrastructures like large shipping ports manufacturing facilities, airports, airbases, abandoned 19th or early 20th century railroad stations, bullfighting rings, cemeteries with noteworthy sculpture groups, etc.

The coast is a space with an enormous cinematographic imprint. The transition from land to the maritime scenery has been of interest to producers and directors, because of the general attraction human beings feel for aquatic landscapes, and their photographic features regarding lighting and the possibility for maritime long shots, among others. Nevertheless, the territory encompassed by coastal filmography is not continuous, that is, not all the coastal spaces have the condition of a city and not all the coastal spaces have served as the setting for filming locations for principal productions. Other factors have to be taken into account such as the mildness of the

3 For example, in Castille and León alone, there are more than 2,000 Bienes de Interés Cultural (Assets of Cultural Interest) located throughout 750 municipalities.

climate or the regional promotion of the territory both from a tourism and cinematographic perspective.

As for accessibility, as mentioned earlier, in the past close proximity to infrastructures such as international airports was a determining factor for shooting international film productions. Today, from a small scale to a larger one, some film shoots planned in a city's historic center district can run into problems because of the difficulty involved in getting very heavy trucks into the area and taking up space on streets that are not prepared for transit with such vehicles. In addition, maintenance and conservation of certain architectural settings can on occasion be incompatible with shooting scenes in and around them that might significantly alter them.⁴

Several authors have pointed out that, even though creative aspects are considered, part of the decision about where to film, especially for big budget movies, involves economic considerations (Wasko, 2003; Elmer & Gasher, 2005). This is where fiscal benefits for filming in certain areas becomes important, which are not identical throughout all of the Spanish ambit.

With the 1975 constitution, the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), the film commission ceased to be an exclusively US phenomenon and little by little developed into an authentic network present in many countries.⁵ One aspect, complementary to the foregoing, for opting for a filming location for certain scenes is the availability or presence of film studios in their proximities (Goldsmith & O'Regan, 2007). Such installations, besides significantly lowering any perception of risk-taking by the big filmmakers, usually provide additional post-production services.

3 Objective

If the purpose of our contribution is to present the general panorama of Spanish cities according to the degree of intensity of their disseminated film image, several specific aims can be detailed out that enable this initial objective to be further defined.

4 As an example, the refusal of the authorities of the Alhambra in Granada to grant a filming permit for the film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Spielberg, 1989) since it meant introducing a vehicle into the Patio de Los Leones of that historic precinct.

5 With regard to Spain, the first regional film commissions were developed in the nineties of the last century and , finally, as a result of the cooperation of several of them, on March 26, 2001, the Spain Film Commission was established, which includes among its founding objectives the promotion of the Spanish territory as a scenic space.

First, the study seeks to show the spatial distribution among Spanish cities of their images depicted in audiovisual fiction. That in itself is an ambitious objective, because it is not limited to analyzing one sole urban area, or a sole filmmaker, or only one genre or a specific film –as often occurs in the specialized literature consulted. Rather, our work attempts to synthesize contents proceeding from a selected yet extensive set of movies with a limited number of indicators. For that purpose, it is necessary to adopt a procedure that focuses on those audiovisual productions whose scenes have had the greatest impact on viewers. Our methodology will provide the means to locate, quantify and weight these film productions, thereby allowing us to elaborate various mappings that enable the different territorial representation of Spanish cities in film to be assessed.

Once this is done, the relevance of different filming locations in three territorial areas will be analyzed: the Autonomous Region of Madrid, coastal cities, and cities located in the country's interior.

Finally, the relevance of the cities' images, disseminated through audiovisual fiction productions, will be linked to some of the aforementioned factors (demographic weight, tourism demand, public subsidies available, the presence of film offices, etc.) that could explain the reasons for this spatial distribution.

4 Methodology

For this proposed objective, the use of IMDb as a primary source was considered. This is a well-known international catalog, currently under the sphere of Amazon, and without backing from any official institution. However, among its advantages, we can highlight the wide array of feature-length films, television series and documentaries that it contains, as well as the numerous and varied information fields rated for each film production, including, the *filming locations*.⁶

⁶ Other alternative sources from the international ambit include Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Films_by_country_of_shooting_location with an extensive number of titles grouped together by country and within them, by regions and cities. However, they do not specify the exact location within these areas. The website <https://www.gocompare.com/travel-insurance/on-location/#/countries> establishes a ranking by countries according to the number of filming locations that have taken place. Spain is in sixth place, behind the USA, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and France, quantifying 10,333 feature-length films shot in our country. However, it includes some statistics that seem difficult to believe, placing Madrid in the 20th slot among Spanish cities in number of filmings, behind cities such as Tarragona and Toledo. There is also the film location search <http://movie-locations.com/>, linked after its publication to The Worldwide Guide To Movie Locations (Reeves, 2001) which lists 71 titles shot in Spain, although it only offers detailed information on 44 of them. At the national level, the use of the Catálogo de la Filmoteca Española was considered, but its information on filming locations was found to be overly generic; the catalog does not include foreign productions

Of the approximately 7.5 million titles in the IMDb catalog, which entails films, TV series episodes, documentaries, etc., registries were retrieved corresponding to fiction productions where place names from Spain appear in the filming location field. Using this broad set of films, information on geographic locations in the corresponding registry for each film was filtered, revised and normalized. Once completed, a group of 5,127 films was obtained, for which there was a minimum spatial approach, with information on filming locations by Spanish province. Out of this set, 7,710 film registries were obtained, since in some movies two or more provinces appear (Figure 1).

Evidently it is difficult to delve into geographic analysis with any degree of detail with this broad selection of films, thus criteria for a hierarchy or ranking were established to order them according to their degree of impact on viewers. Because there is a lack of information on past box office sales corresponding to these movies, as well as the audience numbers through other means, such as video or television, it was deemed pertinent to employ the user-rating scores on the IMDb platform for each of these feature films, with the provision that the movie had received a minimum of 750 votes.

Once movie ranking criteria was established, we analyzed those films that, as of December 31, 2018, had a rating of 7 or higher out of 10. Thus, the extensive group of audiovisual fiction productions in Spain was reduced to a significant sample of 178 movies that held most interest for both national and foreign viewers.

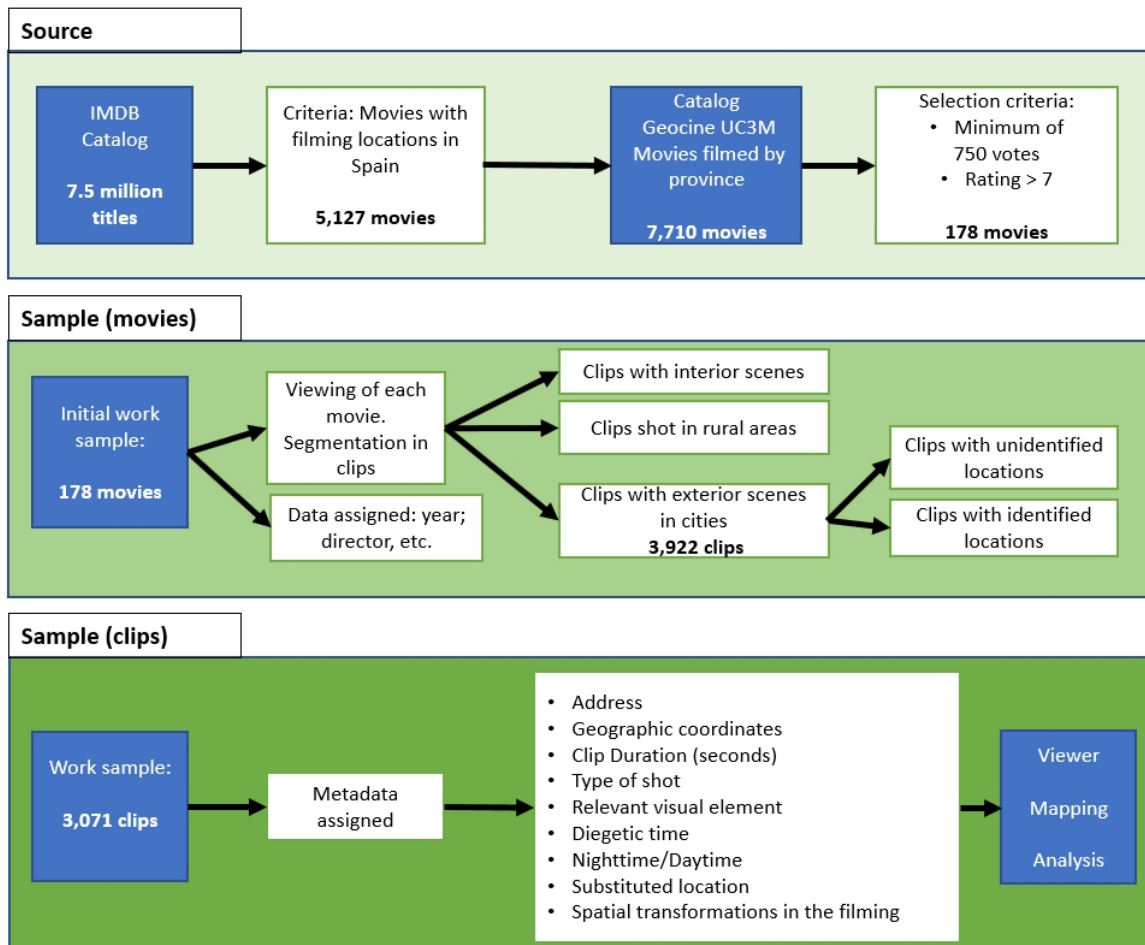
The selection of these movies and reducing the list to an operative number enabled them to be viewed in detail by the research and work team members from the projects *FACES*⁷ and *FICMATUR*.⁸

filmed in our country, nor other audiovisual fiction productions such as TV series. Nor were film repertoires recently created by some regional film commissions useful, due to their heterogenous criteria when including the filming, and the fact that these databases specialize in the most recently released productions.

7 This is the project “Las ciudades españolas en la ficción audiovisual. Registro documental y análisis territorial y audiovisual (FACES-50)” in which, besides the authors of the present article, 19 researchers participate, pertaining to nine Spanish universities and two foreign ones. It is coordinated by the GEOCINE group of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid composed of Agustín Gámir Orueta and Carlos Manuel Valdés (both are project directors), Víctor Aertsen, Paula Bordonada Tosao and Patricia Montecino Huedo.

8 Identifying acronym for the project “La ficción audiovisual en la Comunidad de Madrid: lugares de rodaje y desarrollo del turismo cinematográfico”, made up of 21 researchers and directed by the Madrid universities of Carlos III de Madrid (IP, director of GEOCINE group and project coordinator: Carlos Manuel Valdés; IP and director of TECNODOC group: Virginia Ortiz Repiso), Complutense (IP and director of ESCINE group: Luis Deltell Escolar) and the Autónoma (IP and director of URByTUR group: Diego Barrado).

Figure 1. Source and work methodology



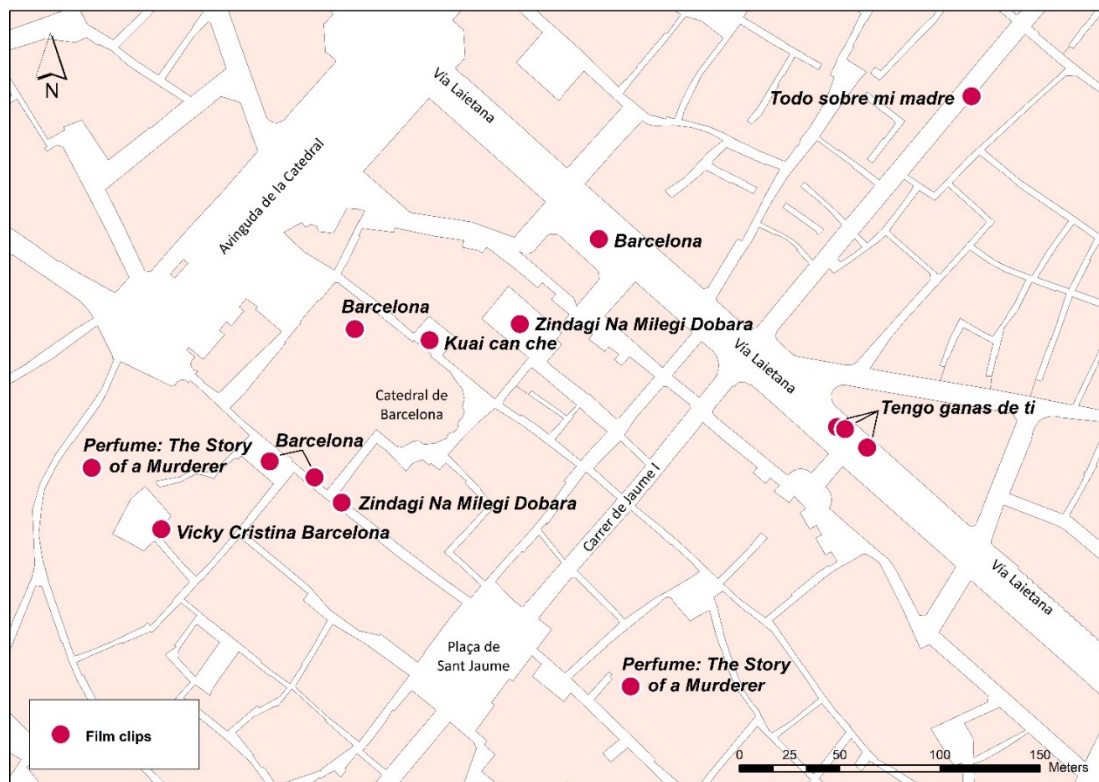
Source: authors' own elaboration

After their viewing, a new archive was drawn up whose registry no longer corresponded to movies, but to clips. Accordingly, the catalog of the movies analyzed was complemented with another— having many more applications from the perspective of spatial analysis- in which the clips from these film productions are identified individually. It should be noted that the number of clips per movie varies, from very few to several dozen. Only those clips whose action takes place in exterior locations or in transportation infrastructures were included (airports, train stations, etc.), discarding shootings in interiors. Our work has analyzed those clips localized in Spanish cities, understood as population centers with more than 10,000 inhabitants. A representative frame was extracted from each clip.

Taking into account the foregoing limitations —only exterior scenes, solely clips that correspond to urban areas and whose exact location is known— the definitive work sample was finally made up of 3,071 clips corresponding to 178 feature-length films.

In the registry corresponding to each clip, metadata information has been added relating to technical aspects of the clip (minute, duration, type of shot, etc.), its narrative features, the connection between the profilmic space and the diegetic space, and lastly, its localization by geographic coordinates in decimal degrees (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Distribution of geo-referenced clips. Example from a section of Barcelona



Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project.

Base map layer by the National Geographic Institute (CNGI)

This database, integrated into a GIS, makes it possible to add new fields of geographic content about the cities, enabling analytical studies and ad hoc mappings to be made. Along these same lines, drawing up a database with these characteristics facilitates it being seen abroad through one or several map viewers.⁹

5 Evolution and spatial distribution of the shootings

The study of audiovisual fiction locations in Spanish cities has a two-fold dimension. First, the temporal evolution will be examined for all the feature-length fiction films for which the IMDb

⁹ These viewers can be found at https://geocine.uc3m.es/faces/mapa_faces.html and at https://ficomatur.uc3m.es/mapa_ficomatur.html (specifically for the Madrid area). In the first one, the list of movies analyzed in this article can be consulted.

registers shows one of the Spanish provinces as a location. This lets us identify periods of higher or lower intensity in audiovisual production shot in Spain. Secondly, the spatial distribution of those films selected for this sample will be addressed, attempting to differentiate distinct filming ambits or territorial areas, giving reasons for this distribution. Finally, taking into account the distribution of the filming locations for movies, some observations will be made regarding those cities not represented.

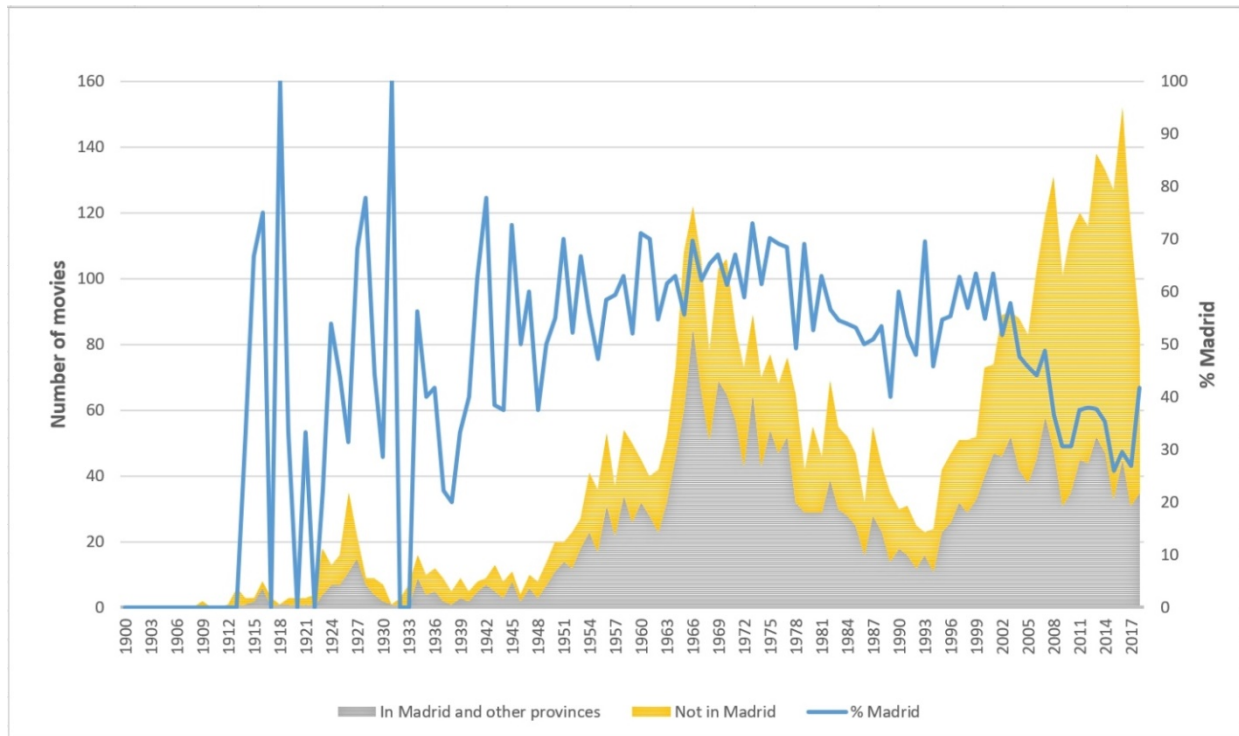
5.1 Temporal evolution of the shootings

Our study does not aim to examine the reasons behind the development of the national film industry, nor does it address the impact brought about by the main Hollywood production companies in the latter part of the 1950s. Nevertheless, before delving further into the territorial distribution of movie locations in Spain, we should take a cursory look at its evolution, always considering the limitations of the source selected.

Figure 3 shows the total number of fiction movies shot in Spain, with locations assigned according to IMDb and later revised by the research team.¹⁰ Its analysis must take into account a series of peculiarities pertaining to the source: the graph only shows fiction feature-length films; thus, documentaries are not included, nor are productions that are not over 60 minutes, which explains the unusually low figures in the first decade of the 20th century. Furthermore, recall that IMDb is not an official registry of audiovisual products, and so logically some productions with limited diffusion do not make it onto this list. At the same time, it should also be taken into account that filming locations are included not only of national productions, but also foreign ones and co-productions.

¹⁰ The location initially assigned by IMDb does not correspond to consistent geographic criteria. Nor is the degree of accuracy. Besides a group of movies in which this field is generically identified with Spain, in other movies confusion exists between the province and its capital, or other cities such as Guadalajara and Toledo are referred to as locations in Mexico or the US, respectively. There are also references to physical place names that are difficult to assign (such as the Pyrenees or the Costa Brava).

Figure 3. Movies shot in Madrid and in the rest of Spain 1900-2018 (n=5,127 movies)



Key: each movie is counted only once, even if it has been filmed in several provinces. In the first category those movies are included that contain scenes shot in Madrid, even if the rest of the movie was filmed in other provinces. In the second category, movies are included in which none of the scenes depict exterior images of Madrid.

Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project and IMDb

Nevertheless, even considering these exceptions, Figure 3 clearly shows an initial period of substantial growth in the number of film shoots that began in the 1950s and continued practically until the Franco regime change in 1976. Between these two dates, the film industry went from a situation of economic hardship –inherent in audiovisual production in the fifties– to having greater facilities in the next two decades. In this same vein, we can observe the arrival of the US film production companies (León, 2010; Rosendorf, 2014; Aertsen et al., 2017) and to a lesser extent European ones, seeking out Spain's striking variety of landscapes, along with obligatory reinvestment of partial production profits in Spain, and a reduction in the costs of hiring specialists and extras for the big productions. It was an industry, which, with the exception of Barcelona and –well into the decade of the 1960s with the *spaghetti westerns*– in Almería, had essentially settled in the capital, looking into the surrounding province area for exterior locations. For this reason, in these years, the province of Madrid's weight is noteworthy, representing between 50 and 60 % of the bulk of filming, with the majority shot in the capital.

From the beginning of the political transition in Spain up to the first half of the 1990s a notable decline in the number of shoots can be observed. This decrease is due to different factors. In part, the economic crisis increased the financial risk for national film productions within a context where public subsidies were reduced. In addition, quality standards (for scripts, selection of lead actors, and the search for locations) rose in comparison to the profusion of movies made during the late Franco-period, many of which were low budget and low quality. Finally, the pivotal period of the main Hollywood production filming in Spain passed, as almost all the factors that had fomented this scenario in previous years then disappeared. In any event, this significant decrease did not represent a reduction in the proliferation of filming in the Madrid province with respect to the rest of Spain.

At the beginning of the second half of the 1990s the figures reflect a substantial increment in number of shoots, even higher than in the 1960s. The development of a new generation of filmmakers- some receiving awards at international festivals –the protection of the national film industry, greater modes for viewing (new Spanish television channels, video, and later DVD) and the overall context of the economic boom in the country all can explain this surge. At this time, the weight represented by the province of Madrid now began to diminish with respect to previous numbers, to around 30-40 % of films. As such, there is somewhat of a deconcentrating of the territorial and urban imaginary, until that time exclusively concentrated in Madrid, displaying a more disseminated distribution throughout the territory and in all of the Spanish cities, with respect to previous decades.

In short, the evolution of movies filmed in our country is characterized by two pivotal periods coinciding with economic development, and a phase, between both of those, of economic crisis, coinciding with the political transition and the country's economic restructuring. At the same time, a trend can be seen towards a reduction in the proliferation of filming in the province of Madrid, which became particularly evident as of the end of the 20th century.

5.2 General distribution of filming locations

Before addressing the general distribution of the filming locations of fiction movies in the Spanish territory, two previous determinants must be taken into account.

The first one is related to the spatial objective of this article, Spanish cities. As of January 1, 2020, of the 8,131 municipalities existing in Spain, only 758 had more than 10,000 inhabitants, adding

up to a total of 37.9 million inhabitants.¹¹ However, if we limit ourselves to the set of Spanish cities, we can observe that the spatial distribution is likewise far from being uniform throughout the country, revealing metropolitan areas with satellite cities in their surroundings, provinces with few urban areas besides the capital itself, or coastal cities that are relatively close to one another.

The second aspect refers to the fact that, even in this space limited to 758 municipalities, an initial distinction is established: on one hand, there is a select group of 140 cities (with 19.3 million inhabitants) with exterior filming locations, according to our chosen sample, and, on the other hand 616 remaining municipalities (with a slightly smaller population, 18.5 million inhabitants) where no filming locations were identified.

An initial assessment that stands out after observing this list of filming locations in urban areas is the exceptional nature of the cities of Madrid and Barcelona, which display very distinct figures from the other municipalities represented. In the case of the Spanish capital, there are 89 feature-length films out of the 178 analyzed (although this does not mean that these movies were filmed exclusively in this city). If the comparison is made not with feature films, but with different exterior locations that comprise the same movie, this percentage goes up to 25.4 %.

Due to the limits of our sample, it seems logical that most cities are featured in quite a small number of movies. Indeed, of 140 municipalities with filming locations, only ten of them include shootings corresponding to more than three movies, and of these, eight are provincial capitals and the other two are municipalities in the Madrid Region (Table 1). Not only is it of interest to record the number of titles filmed in a municipality, but also to compute their duration. If the total duration of the shoots is taken into account (152,645 seconds), almost half of them take place in the municipality of Madrid (70,047 seconds), a notable distance ahead of the other cities: Barcelona (with 17,030 seconds) and Seville (8,618 seconds).

11 In this article, this population threshold for what is urban is adapted, given that there are few municipalities over 10,000 inhabitants whose distribution is dispersed and does not form an urban entity.

Table 1. Principal cities according to the number of movies and seconds of filming in exteriors (n=178 movies)

Cities by number of movies with filming locations in exteriors	Movies	Movies (%)	Cities by duration of filming locations in exteriors	Filming locations by seconds	Filming locations by seconds (%)
Madrid	89	25.4	Madrid	70,047	45.9
Barcelona	26	7.4	Barcelona	17,030	11.2
Sevilla	13	3.7	Sevilla	8,618	5.6
Aranjuez	9	2.6	Toledo	5,989	3.9
Toledo	8	2.3	Ronda	3,096	2.0
Almería	8	2.3	Aranjuez	2,880	1.9
Alcalá de Henares	6	1.7	Vitoria-Gasteiz	1,713	1.1
San Sebastián	6	1.7	Manresa	1,451	1.0
Segovia	6	1.7	Alcalá de Henares	1,407	0.9
Pamplona	4	1.1	Cuenca	1,393	0.9
Rest of cities	175	50	Rest of cities	39,021	25.6
Total	350	100	Total	152,645	100

Legend: Movies refer to the feature-length films shot in each city. Keep in mind that the same movie might have been shot in several cities.

Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project

Furthermore, it is interesting to observe the differences that exist between the number of movies filmed in a municipality and the total seconds of the scenes located in them. Restricting the list to the first ten cities, changes in the order are produced according to the variable considered. This is the case for Ronda, a city featuring only two titles –*Carmen* (Rossi, 1984) and the Bollywood movie *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (You Only Live Once) (Akhtar, 2011)– but which appears as the fifth city in most seconds filmed in its territory. This could be of interest in further research to explore if there are more repercussions for a city appearing in a higher number of movies with scenes of a short duration, or as is the case of this Andalusian city, that its streets and buildings

can be viewed during a longer period of time based on scenes from a smaller number of feature films extensively disseminated among the public.

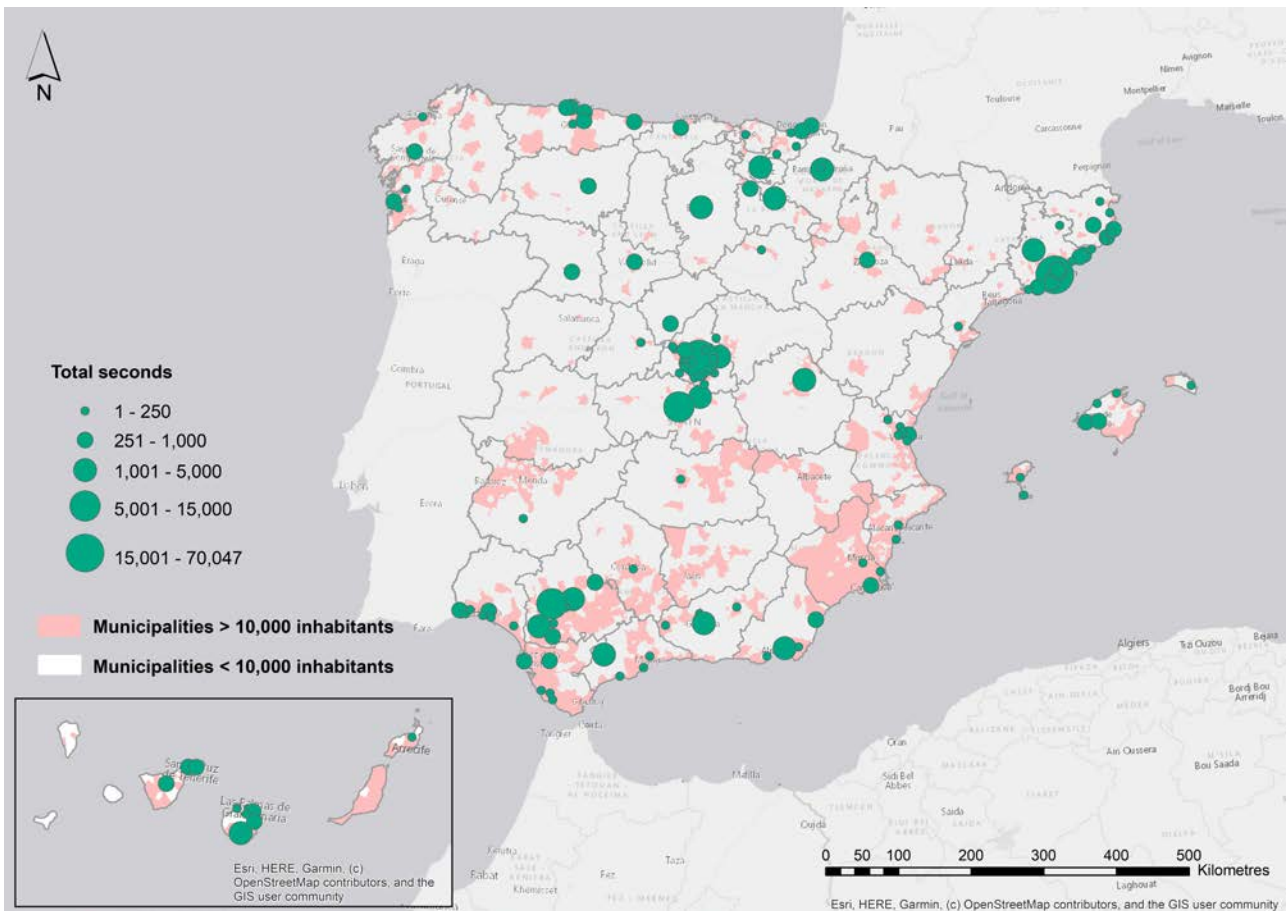
Figure 4 shows the territorial distribution of exterior shootings in Spanish cities weighting them according to their duration in seconds. Three large areas are observed: Madrid and its metropolitan surroundings, urban coastal areas (including those in the archipelagos) and, lastly, cities in the interior of the peninsula. These three territories make up a classic trilogy in the description of several aspects of human geography. The distribution of filming locations is in line with this trilogy (Table 2) because, besides the intervention of physical elements, they are also very influenced by some determining factors pertaining to human geography.

Table 2. Distribution of filming locations by principal territorial areas (n=178 movies)

Territorial areas	Filming in seconds	Filming locations by seconds (%)	Muni.> 10,000 inhabit. Total	Muni.> 10,000 inhabit. with film shoots	Muni.> 10,000 inhabit. with film shoots (%)	Muni.> 10,000 inhabit. without film shoots	Muni.> 10,000 inhabit. without film shoots (%)
Cities in the Madrid Region	78,177	51.2	52	24	46.2	28	4.5
The interior cities	38,220	25.0	454	50	11.0	404	65.4
Coastal cities	36,306	23.8	252	66	26.2	186	30.1
<i>The Peninsular Mediterranean and the Andalusian Atlantic</i>	27,347	17.9	136	39	28.7	97	15.7
<i>The Cantabrian and Galician coasts</i>	3,800	2.5	56	11	19.6	45	7.3
<i>The Archipelagos</i>	5,159	3.4	60	16	26.7	44	7.1
TOTAL	152,645	100.0	758	140	100 %	618	100 %

Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project

Figure 4. Distribution of shooting locations in exteriors by duration for municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants (n=178 movies)



Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project.

Base map layer by the National Geographic Institute (CNGI)

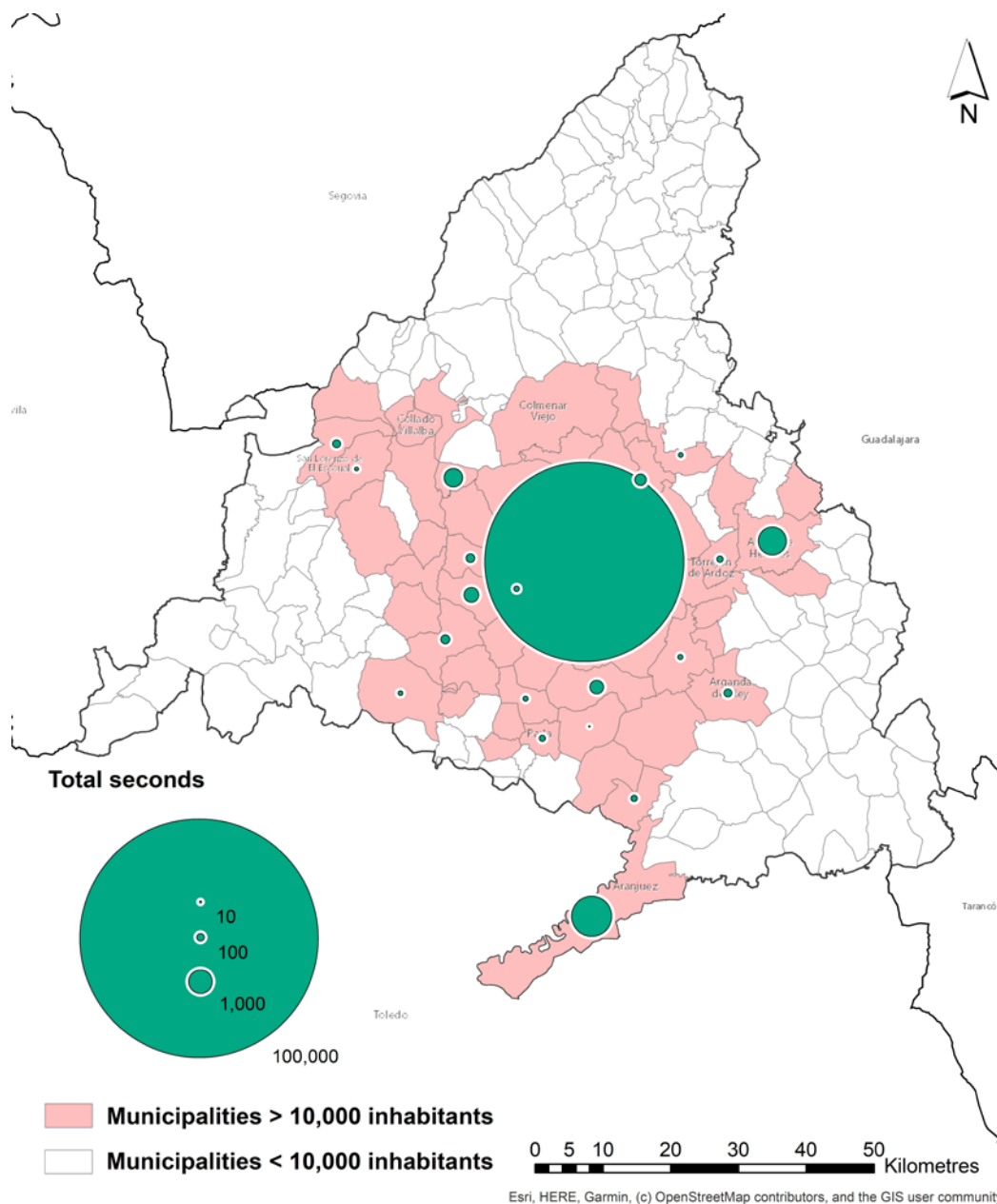
5.3 Madrid and its environs

In the Madrid region, 51.2 % of filming takes place (weighted by their duration), and in which nearly half of Madrid's 52 cities participate. However, this figure corresponds to a more than 50-year span of time in which the urban landscape of the city and the surrounding area has been substantially modified. Madrid has gone from being a city with a limited size and scant economic weight to becoming one of the five most important metropolises on the European continent.

This data clearly reveals that in this region with only one province, the capital city's clear over-representation warrants detailed study. However, as noted earlier, this article does not analyze the intraurban distribution of filming locations. The second Madrid city by number of shoots is Alcalá de Henares, which has been able to attract productions corresponding to movies with quite varied themes such as *Spartacus* (Kubrick, 1960), *Amantes* (Aranda, 1991), *Nadie hablará de nosotras cuando hayamos muerto* (Díaz Yanes, 1995) and *Planta 4ª* (Mercero, 2003).

At the same time, besides Madrid and Alcalá de Henares, both with their own filming office, the map in Figure 5 shows some 20 cities in the region, which can be explained by different reasons and situations.

Figure 5. Distribution of filming locations in exteriors for municipalities of more than 10,000 inhabitants in the Madrid Region (n=178 movies)



Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project.

Base map layer by the National Geographic Institute (CNGI)

Following chronological order, in the first years of the 1960s during the heyday of the North American productions, huge sets were erected in what at that time constituted the rural outskirts closest to the city. Some of these filming locations, such as *El Cid* (Mann, 1961) or *Doctor*

Zhivago (Lean, 1965), today correspond to neighborhoods in the city of Madrid, and others to other urban municipalities in the greater Madrid metropolitan area, such as Las Rozas de Madrid, where sets were constructed for scenes from *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (Mann, 1964).

In the first half of the 1970s, some international productions decided to shoot several of their scenes in the Modern Age palaces located in the outskirts of Madrid. This is the case of the San Lorenzo del Escorial Monastery, the Palace of the Infante Don Luis in Boadilla del Monte and, quite prominently, the Royal Palace of Aranjuez with its gardens, well-characterized as an Italian palace, in *Patton* (Schaffner, 1970), a Russian one in *Nicholas and Alexandra* (Schaffner, 1971) and a French one in *The Three Musketeers* (Lester, 1973) and *The Four Musketeers* (Lester, 1974); additionally, it formed part of the film set for *Goya en Burdeos* (Saura, 1999) and *Goya's Ghost* (Forman, 2006).

Finally, there are several cities that comprise the metropolitan belt of Madrid where some Spanish filmmakers have sought out other urban environments than the ones characteristic of the capital. This involved portrayal of the anonymous city, not the city known to tourists. In some cases, the filming locations were in less densely populated urban settings with single family dwellings (Majadahonda, Pozuelo de Alarcón, Torreloaón). Others showed dormitory town in Madrid's first metropolitan ring (Getafe, Rivas Vaciamadrid) and from its outer ring (Fuenlabrada, Móstoles and Parla) shooting scenes in the latter from *La flor de mi secreto* and *Los abrazos rotos* (Almodóvar, 1995 and 2009, respectively).

5.4 Coastal cities

In 66 coastal municipalities,¹² of the 252 with more than 10,000 inhabitants, a wide diversity of movies has been shot, adding up to one fourth of the filming duration time. Nonetheless, there are considerable differences between the coasts, since the majority of the projected images correspond to cities on the Levante coast, together with the Andalusian Atlantic coast.

Undoubtedly, the most dynamic coastal area in the Spanish territory is the Mediterranean, with its year-round stable climate, barring a few brief equinoctial exceptions, which facilitates the work of the exterior shoots in film productions. On the other hand, accessibility is another key factor. Ease of access to most major airports and highways with central areas like Madrid and Barcelona condition this spatial distribution of filming locations, along with having their own film production

¹² Coastal municipalities are understood as those that border on the coastline, discarding those that, while they are near the coast and have links with it, they are not on it.

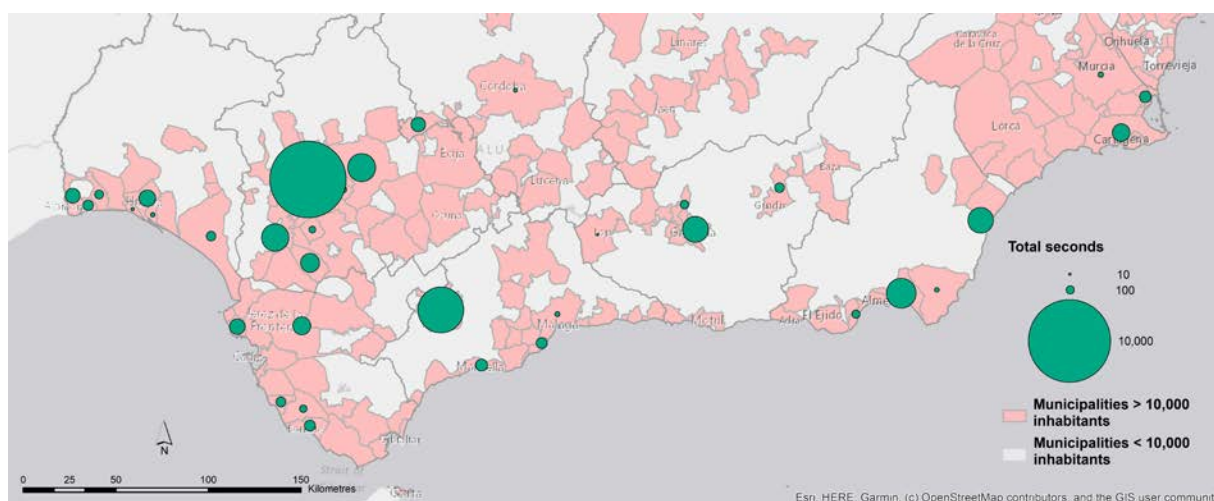
infrastructure, as is the case of the Ciudad de La Luz studios in the Valencia Autonomous Region.¹³ These features can also be extended to the Andalusian Atlantic coast, generating this first group of cinema coastal spaces. With these aforementioned factors in mind, we can identify several areas of concentration:

- Having its epicenter in the capital itself and boosted by accessibility to this regional center, the Barcelona metropolitan area has a very high degree of concentration of films and clips, with such noteworthy and well-known productions as *Vicky, Cristina, Barcelona* (Allen, 2008), *Todo sobre mi madre* (Almodóvar, 1999; Ross, 2017) and *Perfume. The Story of a Murderer* (Tykwer, 2006). Barcelona is the second city in Spain in number of filming locations (26 titles), but with a provincial pattern that differs from Madrid. The other municipalities with film shoots in the province of Barcelona are primarily located along the coastline, a linear stretch linking it with the Costa Brava. In the south, from the tourist destinations of Sitges –the setting for scenes in movies such as *Lo strano vizio della signora Wardh* (Martino, 1971) and *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Ibáñez Serrador, 1976)– and Vilanova and Geltrú, this pattern of a continuous stretch of coastline is interrupted.
- The Balearic Islands display irregular features in film productions since, if we identify film shoots in each of the islands, they are chiefly concentrated in Mallorca, and to a lesser extent in Ibiza. The city of Palma and its hinterland has the most movie locations, with such notable scenes from classic cinematography as *El Verdugo* (García Berlanga, 1963) in the capital's port area, rounded out by scenes shot in the Drach Caves in Porto Cristo. There are very few filming locations for cities that are in the interior of the islands, with the majority of movies filmed in coastal cities. In this area there is a clear mutual understanding between the tourism and film industries. Cinema, since the beginning of the island's tourism boom, has shifted the images depicting Mallorca according to the profile of the tourist it has sought to attract during each of its stages of tourism development (Brotos, Murray, & Blázquez, 2016).
- As for the Levantine coast, there are two main focal points for filming: the urban area of the Valencia capital with scenes from *El Reino* (Sorogoyen, 2018) and Cartagena-La Manga, whose historic center district was the scene for shooting *Megan Lavey* (Cowperthwaite, 2017).

¹³ Regarding the first economic impacts of these studios, see *Las posibilidades territoriales y turísticas de los estudios Ciudad de la Luz en Alicante* (Ferrándiz, 2012). After a lawsuit was won by Pinewood Studios, the Ciudad de la Luz studios closed its doors. Later, the Regional Government of Valencia opted for using the facilities as a new space for digital startups in Alicante.

- Key focal points for filming on the Andalusian Mediterranean coast (Figure 6) are located in the urban clusters of Almería and Málaga (Sánchez Alarcón & Fernández, 2006; Vigar & Gruiñan, 2004). Among the most noteworthy are the popular movie *Patton* (Schaffner, 1970) and *The Wind and the Lion* (Milinus, 1975) filmed in the historic quarters of Almería, as well as *Män som hatar kvinnor* (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*) (Oplev, 2009), a novel made into a movie and which depicts part of the Málaga city center. The latter is an example of movies that were little recognized by Spanish audiences, whether because they were not distributed in our country (despite portraying scenes from Spain) or because its impact is less noteworthy. Nevertheless, it was a film that, starting with a budget of 13 million dollars, went on to earn 104 million. According to Wikipedia, it is the most successful Scandinavian picture in recent years, having being viewed by nearly two million spectators.

Figure 6. Distribution of filming locations in exteriors for municipalities of over 10,000 inhabitants on the Andalusian and Murcia coast (n=178 movies)



Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project.

Base map layer by the National Geographic Institute (CNGI)

- There are several key points located on the Andalusian Atlantic coast around the area of Trafalgar, with productions like *La Ley del Deseo* (Almodóvar, 1989) and *La Voz Dormida* (Zambrano, 2011).¹⁴

14 Outside our selected sample there are other filming locations known to movie audiences such as the one corresponding to the James Bond picture, *Die Another Day* (Tamahori, 2002) substituting Havana's Malecon seaside esplanade with the one in Cádiz.

- As for the Canary Islands, filming locations are concentrated in three of its eight islands, essentially the two main islands and Lanzarote. This distribution, logical if we consider the demographic, economic and administrative weight of the islands of Grand Canary and Tenerife, along with Lanzarote's volcanic landscape, involves a limited dissemination of images from other cities located in the rest of the archipelago.¹⁵ Its temperate climate, good communications by direct flights with the peninsula and its tax breaks have attracted several film shoots to the islands. In Tenerife, the main filming areas are located in the cities of Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal de La Laguna, Puerto de la Cruz and Los Cristianos, coinciding with most of the tourist landmarks in this space and which are the setting for the movie *Qué Dios nos perdone* (Sorogoyen, 2016). The case of Grand Canary Island is similar, with the central urban spaces of Las Palmas and Maspalomas depicted in scenes from *Palmeras en la Nieve* (González Molina, 2015). Lanzarote, with its desert landscapes, has attracted producers and directors, although some scenes have been filmed in its urban centers such as those corresponding to *Los Abrazos Rotos* (Almodóvar, 2009).

The Cantabrian coast, as well as the Rías Baixas area, has a lower density of filming locations compared to the Mediterranean, with weather likely limiting the number of movies shot there. However, other phenomenon such as the Camino de Santiago have acted as a narrative thread for some productions, up to the point of appearing in the name of some movies, like *The Way* (Esteves, 2010). Along these lines, the filmic territory can be defined in the following way:

- The Gipuzkoa coast has five cities, with the notable focal points of Donosti (San Sebastián), with filming productions like *La ardilla roja* (Medem, 1993), and Hondarribia, where some scenes were shot from *Papillon* (Schaffner, 1973).¹⁶
- In Asturias filming locations on coastal cities are concentrated in Gijon, with movies such as the Oscar-winning *Volver a empezar* (Garci, 1982) -a true homage to this city -Llanes, with numerous scenes from the movie *El Orfanato* (Bayona, 2007) and, to a lesser extent Avilés, depicted in scenes from *El Milagro de P. Tinto* (Fesser, 1998) in the area around its port.
- The Vigo Ría (the Vigo estuary) is a key point on the Galician coast (Nogueira, 2004), in contrast to the limited images from the Rías Altas (the Upper Rias). Several scenes were shot

¹⁵ Proof of this is the recent volcanic eruption on the island of La Palma that projected abroad the location and characteristics of La Palma cities - such as Llanos de Aridane and Santa Cruz de la Palma- whose features were little known by most Spaniards and which were certainly not known to foreigners.

¹⁶ For filming locations in Bilbao, see: *Bilbao en la mirada documental* (Lorente, 2005).

there from *Los Lunes al Sol* (León de Aranoa, 2002) in the city of Vigo as well as in the southern coast of the Morrazo Peninsula.

5.5 The interior cities

The foregoing figures demonstrate the concentration of filming locations in the hinterland area of Madrid, Barcelona, as well as in a group of urban areas located on the Mediterranean coast, the Archipelagos, and to a lesser extent, the Atlantic coast. However, there is a considerable number of cities in the interior of the peninsula, most of them small or mid-size, in terms of their demography and surface areas—which are depicted less frequently in filming and which have features that differentiate them from the rest of the Spanish urban network. We are referring to movies like *El Cid* (Anthony Mann, 1961), *Chimes at Midnight* (Orson Welles, 1965), *La folie des grandeurs* (Gérard Oury, 1971) shot in Toledo, San Lorenzo del Escorial, Granada and La Puebla del Río, *The Three Musketeers* (Richard Lester, 1973) filmed, among other places, in Aranjuez and in Toledo, *The Four Musketeers* (Richard Lester, 1974) with scenes set in Almería, Toledo and Segovia, and *Kingdom of Heaven* (Ridley Scott, 2005) shot in Ávila, Palma del Río, in addition to Sevilla.

In particular, the silhouette of a castle set apart from or barely integrated into the urban center, or filming in the interior of its rooms, or viewing a long section of an old city wall without other constructions interfering with the shot, are aspects highly valued by both Spanish and foreign filmmakers. Larger cities such as Seville and Granada also contain these valuable assets, but for the latter two, the most interesting architectural heritage for filming is found in enclosed spaces, with controlled access, compared to the rest of the urban fabric. This is the case of the royal palaces, the Alcázares Reales, used to shoot such notable films as *Lawrence of Arabia* (Lean, 1962), *The Wind and the Lion* (Millius, 1975) and *Non, ou A Va Gloria de Mandar (No, or the Vain Glory of Command)* (Oliveira, 1990), as well as the Alhambra palace in Granada where numerous movies were shot, including the scenes from the *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (Nathan Juran, 1958), one of the first North American productions that came to our country, and which later, in 2008, became part of the United States National Film Registry at the Library of Congress, earmarked for preservation due to its cinematographic quality.

If we add the facilities that these cities provide in terms of accessibility and location for the filming crews, it is logical that that a type of specialization by these cities in the interior has developed because of the so-called historical cinema.

Both local and regional administrations are aware of this differentiating feature with respect to cities like Madrid and Barcelona and have opted for a clear alliance between historical cinema, the city's architectural heritage and cultural tourism; three components that mutually enhance one another in the interior's urban spaces. The attributes of these cities with respect to this type of movie is nothing new. Indeed, we can see in the government newsreels from the Francoist period, the NO-DOs, intense publicity efforts to promote these cities.¹⁷ Worthy of note is the effort made by some of these cities to augment their visibility beyond their architectural heritage sites. In recent years, some movies like *Caníbal* (Manuel Martín Cuenca, 2013) and *Granada Nights* (Abid Kahn, 2021) were filmed in their entirety in Granada without showing the Alhambra in any of their numerous exterior scenes.¹⁸

However, the image of these smaller cities in the peninsula's interior has not been limited to serving as a set for period audiovisual productions. They have also contributed to the filmic construction of the provincial city- the *ciudad de provincias* (Ríos, 1999; Stepanian, 2011), something not limited to audiovisual fiction, since it was a theme also dealt with in 19th and 20th century literature.

These are cities that became involuntary protagonists of movies such as *El sur* (Víctor Erice, 1983) filmed in Zamora, Vitoria and Logroño, *Te doy mis ojos* (Icíar Bollaín, 2003) in Toledo, and *Amantes* (Vicente Aranda, 1991) with scenes from Alcalá de Henares and Burgos. The anonymity, the viewer's lack of identification with them, accentuated even more its character as a provincial city, as can be observed in *Plácido* (García Berlanga, 1961), filmed totally in Manresa, where its storyline took place, as if in a theatrical space. On other occasions, this lack of identification is in response to the director's intention to contextualize the film narration within any given provincial town and not a specific one. One of the clearest examples is *Calle Mayor* (Bardem, 1956), whose montage includes scenes shot in Cuenca and Logroño, with both cities forming part of one sole city in the narrative.¹⁹ This movie shows us the city, almost in its entirety

17 In the case of Cáceres not only are there several documentaries featuring its city wall, the Plaza Mayor, the Puerta de la Estrella and the Torre de los Púlpitos, but the city even underwent an architectural facelift, demolishing some of its row houses and lowering the outline of others, to endow it with greater monumentality and provide access to its historic quarters in keeping with its importance (Terrón, 2020) .

18 In the first case it is paradigmatic since the story takes place in the Darro River valley, and in the British movie narrating the experiences of foreign students in the city, it is only in the last five minutes that it is shown from the lookout point of San Miguel.

19 Although the film has a few opening scenes shot in the Palacio neighborhood of the Center district of Madrid, the rest of the movie was filmed in these two cities.

from an aerial shot, where it is easy to differentiate the city's urban limits from the surrounding rural area.

The small size of these cities results in the film's characters being depicted by the camera in a limited number of places: the main town square, the bar, the casino, the church, and the river, whose image is sometimes repeated in different scenes in the same film. It is an urban space, different from that of the big cities, with narrow streets and few passers-by and where the audience is able to hear the sound of the church bells or of shoes on its cobblestone streets. Socially speaking, it is a conservative city, where time has stood still.²⁰

In the foregoing paragraphs we have highlighted how the shootings of this film sample are concentrated in 140 of the 758 municipalities of over 10,000 inhabitants. The result reveals a numerous group of cities in which not a single filming can be found in the selected sample. This is the case of cities located in Aragón, La Mancha, Jaén, a large portion of Extremadura, some cities of Castilla and León and in the interior of regions like Valencia, Murcia, Asturias and Galicia. These are small to mid-size cities, located in the territories most affected by depopulation in the country. Along these lines, a clear spatial correlation is seen between what is known as the *España vaciada* (the empty Spain) with what we could term *España no proyectada* (the Spain that is not projected on the screen).

The phenomenon of depopulation in Spain is known to have extended territorially. If in the second part of the 20th century it essentially affected rural areas, the latest demographic data indicates that it is also extending to some small and mid-size cities, where the demographic and migratory balances are negative. Countering this phenomenon is no easy task and requires different long-term strategies, whether of a demographic or economic nature or others involving maintenance of facilities and infrastructures.

Nonetheless, along with these policies it is also necessary to advocate for portrayal of these cities' images, that is, enhance their visibility, including the interior of their urban fabric, their streets, and their representative buildings and properties, etc. Making them more visible not only entails resorting to news stories, documentaries and tourism promotional campaigns, but also involves any other artistic work that would portray the city. Like the literary novel, narrating a

²⁰ This statement coincides with one from María Marcos Ramos who, after analyzing 270 films shot between 1977 and 2010 in Burgos, pointed out: "although there are many historical pieces, very few depict the present day. They portray an image of a provincial city where time seems to be frozen and where modernity has not yet arrived" (Marcos, 2020).

cinematographic story in which, to a greater or lesser extent, the city is the backdrop or the protagonist for the film, generally implies two positive aspects: the inhabitants' self-identification with the geographic spaces depicted by film production and the availability of a tool or instrument for indirectly promoting the city.

6 The relationship of the distribution of filming locations in Spain with urban and economic factors

6.1 Urban determinants

The preceding paragraphs offer us a glimpse into how some of the aforementioned factors for filming locations are clearly manifested in the Spanish case, such as proximity to the coast or access infrastructure. In the following, we focus our attention on urban features and the presence of film commissions. In relation to the urban dimension, it has been calculated –in the group of the 140 municipalities for which there is data on shooting– the correlation between the population size and degree of filming was calculated, measured in the seconds of exterior shots in these same cities, obtaining a result of +0.894 (Figure 7). Nevertheless, this data is very conditioned by the considerable weight of Madrid and Barcelona in the sample since both cities represent 57 % of the filming locations, measured according to their duration in seconds. Not taking into account these two cities, the correlation between both variables decreases significantly to +0.279. Thus, even if the demographic weight is highlighted, we must consider other factors that could explain the territorial distribution of filming locations among Spanish cities.

The second explanation lies in the presence of differentiating factors in the interior of these cities, and specifically, in their cultural architectural heritage, as this is intrinsically linked to the city's cultural clout.²¹ An indirect way to assess this aspect is to quantify the visitors coming to these

21 Regarding a city's cultural clout, in the international ambit the Cinema Cities Index stands out. It is an index elaborated to consider movies screened, movie screens per city, the existence of film festivals, and the price of movie tickets (Coate, Verhoeven, & Davidson, 2017). However, it is an indicator focused more on the distinct traits of cities for showing films rather than for shooting audiovisual productions there. In the Spanish ambit, the studies have been focused on quantifying and assessing the cultural environment of a specific set of cities. This is the case of EXCELTUR which, for a group of 22 cities, developed a Tourism Competitiveness Monitor, including in its composition a variable on the capacity for attracting leisure products (EXCELTUR, 2017). There is also work focused on the Spain's World Heritage Cities (GCPHE in Spanish) that assess their position by examining online tourism reputation (Márquez-González & Caro Herrero, 2017); as well as scholarly endeavors into city webpages of the Autonomous Region capitals as instruments to create and disseminate the city brands (Saéz, Periañez, & Mediano, 2013). Finally, the recently published work of Escalona et al. (Escalona, Escolano-Utrilla, Sánchez-Valverde, & Sáez-Pérez, 2022) which, using the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor (MCCC) developed by the EU, measures the cultural performance of 81 Spanish cities with a population between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants.

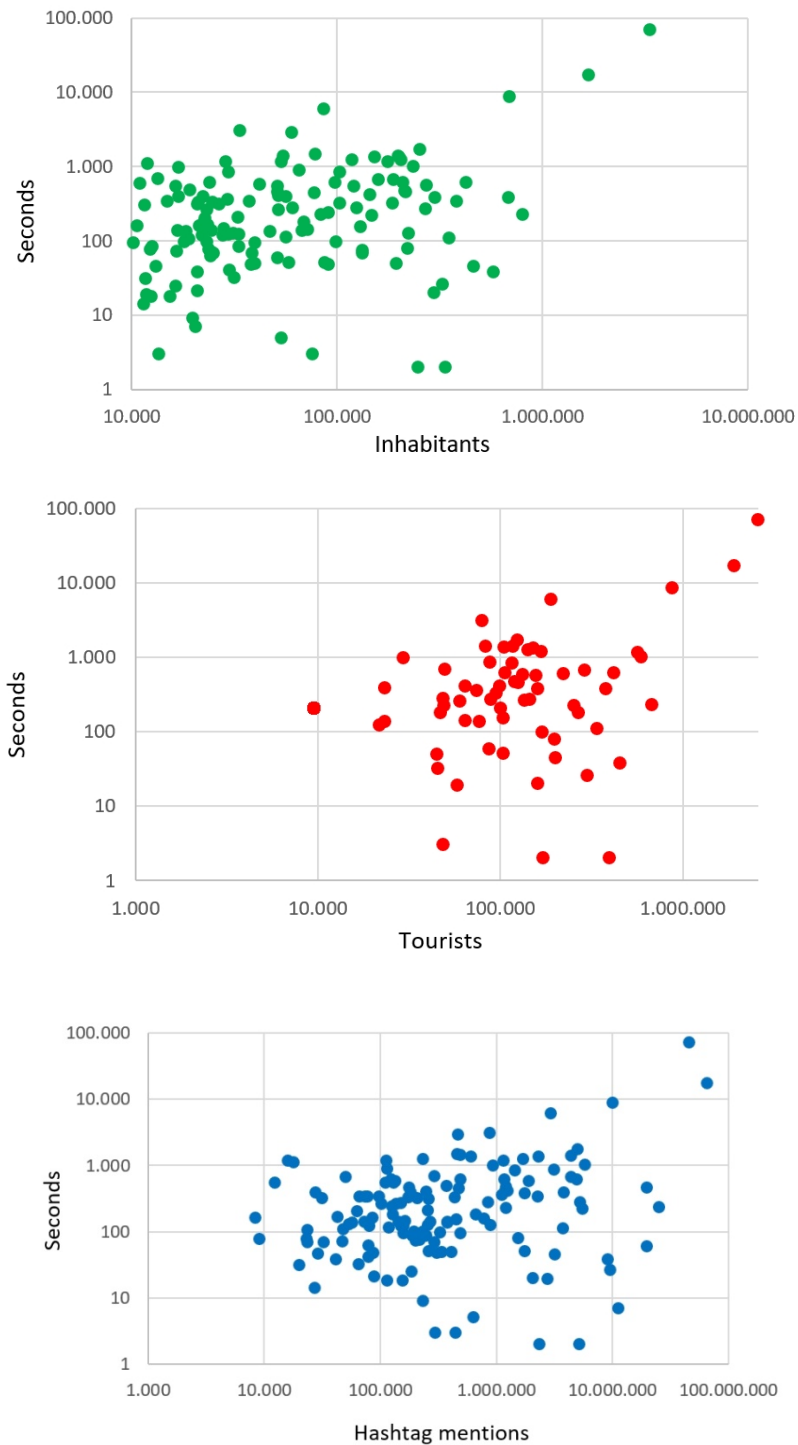
cities. A link has been found between the presence of exterior shots of these cities and the number of tourists visiting them. To verify this, use was made of the variable *Viajeros por puntos turísticos* (Tourists visiting attractions) from the 2020 Hotel Occupancy Survey, developed by the National Statistics Institute (known as the INE in Spain), encompassing a spatial area that includes 188 municipalities. Without establishing the number of visitors to these cities, which receive most tourists, the motivation behind it is exclusively the greater or lesser dissemination of images depicted on movie screens, and as such, without determining direct correspondence, the correlation between both variables is significant, providing a positive result of +0.832 (or +0.855 if only the 65 municipalities with overnight stays are used).²²

It was also determined that there is reinforcement between the different modes for dissemination of the spatial image of these 140 cities in which not only film projection plays a part. Along these lines, the number of hashtag mentions of this set of cities was counted on February 7, 2022, and related to the total duration of the shoots, obtaining a correlation of +0.653.

Along the lines of the foregoing paragraph, another explanation for the choice of a city for filming exteriors is whether it has singular architectural elements that facilitate substituting it for another city, without noticeably affecting the authenticity of the images. We can refer to the oriental components of the Islamic architecture in Andalusia; medieval architecture from the two Castilles and Extremadura, common to that found in any European urban area; the Bourbon dynasty palaces around Madrid, similar to those throughout France; the Canarian architecture that has features similar to the historic quarters of Latin American cities, or even the subtropical vegetation of some Spanish cities. The authenticity of Spanish cities when portraying foreign ones is worthy of note and well-recognized, as can be observed in Table 3. The characteristics of the architectural heritage of these cities explains the greater attention given to them, especially in the case of foreign film shoots.

²² These data are consistent with the case of Italy. A recent research (Aru & Capineri, 2021) establishes that de 54% of filming location are concentrated in the main cities of Italian tourism (Milan, Venice, Turin, Naples, Florence) and this percentage exclude Rome, considered a case apart since it is also the home of the Cinecittá studios.

Figure 7. Scatter plots, in logarithmic scale, of Spanish cities according to seconds filmed and the variables of inhabitants (January 1, 2020), tourists (2020) and hashtags mentions (February 7, 2022)



Source: authors' own elaboration based on information from the FACES-50 project and the Spanish National Institute of Statistics

Table 3. Examples of Spanish cities used to substitute foreign cities (n=178 movies)

City where filmed	City or cities substituted	Movie
Almería	Argel, Malta, Messina, Palermo	<i>Patton</i> (Schaffner, 1970)
Almería	Tánger	<i>The Wind and the Lion</i> (Milius, 1975)
Cartagena	Ramadi (Irak)	<i>Megan Leavey</i> (Cowperthwaite, 2017)
Gáldar	Malabo, Fernando Poo.	<i>Palmeras en la nieve</i> (Molina, 2015)
Girona	Grasse (Francia), París	<i>Perfume The Story of a Murderer</i> (Tykwer, 2006)
Las Palmas de G.C	Casablanca	<i>Allied</i> (Zemeckis, 2016)
Madrid	Moscú	<i>Doctor Zhivago</i> (Lean, 1965)
San Cristóbal de La Laguna	Montevideo	<i>Montevideo vidimo se!</i> (Bjelogrljic, 2014)
San Sebastián / Donosti	Berlín	<i>Battle of Britain</i> (Hamilton, 1969)
Sevilla	Damasco, Deraa, El Cairo, Jerusalén.	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i> (Lean, 1962)
Soria	Perm	<i>Doctor Zhivago</i> (Lean, 1965)
Tortosa	París	<i>Perfume The Story of a Murderer</i> (Tykwer, 2006)
Zaragoza	San Diego	<i>Megan Leavey</i> (Cowperthwaite, 2017)

Source: authors' own elaboration based on IMDb and information from the FACES-50 project

6.2 Economic determinants. The role of film commissions

Besides the Spain Film Commission, each of the 17 Autonomous Regions have their own film commission, to which can be added those existing in 22 provinces, 10 islands and 29 regions; this panorama is rounded out by 173 film offices that are linked to cities (Figure 8). Of the 178 movies analyzed, it was verified that only 29.3 % of them were shot in more than one autonomous region and 34.5 % in two or more provinces. A brief look at the movie shoots reveals the existence territories for filming, which we will elaborate on in the following, and which

must not be understood as exclusionary, since a small number of the movies have been filmed in several of them.

The hinterland area of Madrid, which includes the immediately surrounding provinces (Toledo, Segovia, Guadalajara, etc.), is established as a space of great interest for filming. Along with this factor, we must take into account the variety and quantity of public entities there that foment and attract shootings in the area at different administrative levels, ranging from the local to regional. In the most peripheral area, a dichotomy can be observed between entities that foment film shoots linked to heritage cities, like Toledo and Segovia, and those areas scarcely influenced by regional film commissions. In fact, of the 44 filming locations in the Madrid Region and another autonomous region, on eight occasions Castile and León was used, with another eight in La Mancha to round out exterior scenes.

Catalonia has clearly opted for using cinema as a way to promote its territory, including its coastal surroundings, often assisted by the dynamism of its Mediterranean coastal areas developed by the service sector, along with the heritage and territorial and cultural relevance of Barcelona's cities, and to a lesser degree Girona, in contrast with Tarragona and Lleida. Notwithstanding, in the autonomous region interior, interesting local and regional initiatives can be found that have produced a true film office network, capable of providing visibility to a large part of the Catalonian territory. The Barcelona Media Park, located in the 22@ neighbourhood, is home to several companies linked to audiovisual and film production. In 2011, 1,365 jobs related to this branch of activity were recorded in the city (Martínez, 2013).

Euskadi (the Basque Country) has also covered its territory with promotional film agencies. These are often entities with a two-fold scope of action, one for the provincial capital and the other for the province itself. An example can be found in the province of Vizcaya, where the Bilbao Bizkaia Film Commission covers both areas of action, the city of Bilbao and the Vizcaya province. Hence, the urban continuity of the metropolitan area is combined, creating an authentic urban cinematographic system.

The Cantabrian costal area displays an organizational pattern similar to the Basque Country, with the exception of the entities promoting filming in the city-province. As they are one-province autonomous regions, this function is implicit in the makeup of the sponsoring entities for these territories. This situation extends to the adjacent province of Lugo. In contrast, the rest of Galicia centralizes its promotional system through the regional commission with the exceptions of given

cities with more clout or points of reference, as is the case of Santiago de Compostela, which has its own office, closely linked to the tourism-pilgrimage phenomenon, the Camino de Santiago.

Andalusia constitutes a space that has a high capacity to attract shootings through its regional film commission. However, there are two clear intraregional entities: the coastal area and the interior space linked to the Guadalquivir valleys and the IntraBaetic Basin. In the first case, it parallels the tourism activity and the economic dynamism of the sun and beach model. There are provincial film commissions, such as those in Málaga, Huelva and Almería that at the same time are supported by the Andalusia Film Commission. However, in addition, there are local offices in numerous coastal cities and even a minor territories office as is the case of the Axarquía Film Office.²³ On the other hand, a network of mid-size cities in central Andalusia is extremely important regarding the creation of local offices. The great appeal of many of these heritage cities is highly valued by the filmmaking sector, as well as being an accessible and well-connected territory, capable of providing the resources and means to undertake productions.

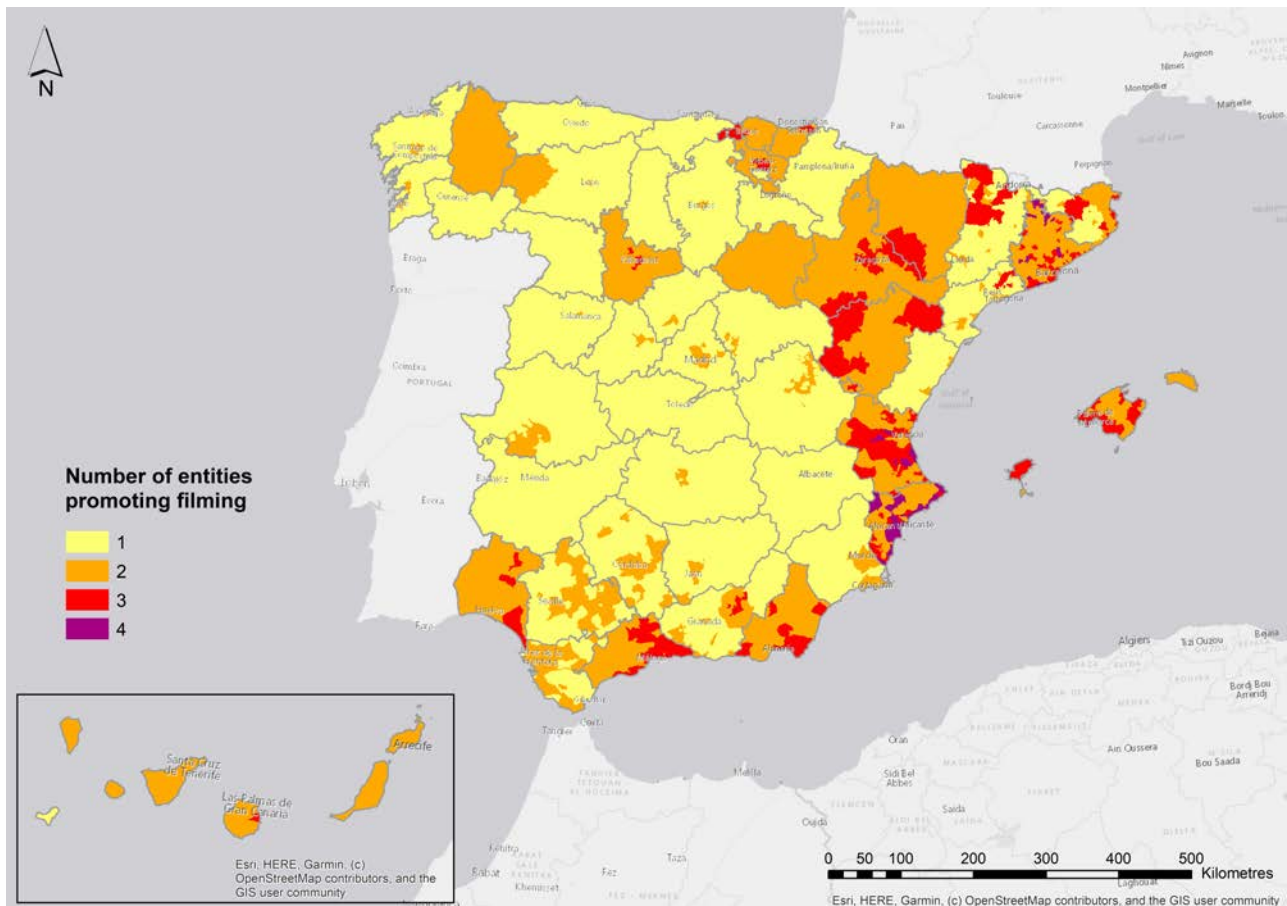
The area of Levante and the Balearic Islands make up a very dynamic territory as far as filmography is concerned. There is a strong commitment to this sector and to attracting shootings at multiple levels through the constitution of a complex network of film commissions and offices in towns, areas, islands, and autonomous region. It is the area in Spain with the most highly developed film promotion as there are places in the province of Alicante and the Balearic Islands where there might be four entities in the same town.

The Canary Islands territory is composed of a regional film promotion commission. However, following the model of the Balearic Islands, each of the islands has an office, except for the island of de El Hierro. In addition, of an exceptional nature, the municipality of Telde has the services of its own filming office. One of the main advantages of filming in the Canary Islands is its tax incentives because of their status as Special Zone and because of their promotion of film activities.²⁴

23 Recently, the Axarquía Film Office and the Málaga Film Commission signed an agreement together for filming territories, creating synergies to benefit cinematographic activities in all their municipalities.

24 Details of the tax guide for the Canary Island audiovisual sector can be found at https://www.grancanariafilm.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/guia-fiscal_gcfc_es_octubre_2021_V1.pdf

Figure 8. Film commissions and film offices-their scope of action (n=252 offices)



Key: to sum up the number of entities that promote shootings, data at the municipal level has first been used, adding data from the provincial, autonomous region, minor territories and national scale, that is, the Spain Film Commission, which is present throughout the entire Spanish territory, with a maximum of five offices that can carry out their activity in one municipality.

Source: authors' own elaboration based on information obtained from each territorial filmographic promotional entity and the CNIG

The tax deduction for foreign productions is 30 % (for the first million euros) and 25 % for remaining expenditure in our country, with a limit of up to 10 million euros per production. But some autonomous communities have increased these percentages upwards: in the case of the Statutory Region of Navarre the percentage goes up to 40 %, and in the Canary Islands it increases to 50 % (for the first million euros, and 45 % in the rest).²⁵ The importance of this

²⁵ On the other hand, each city applies its own filming rates, although there is not a uniform system that enables comparisons between them. Within each urban center, the rate varies according to the urban category of the thoroughfare, the area of occupied public space and the number of filming days. When shooting takes place on private properties, the fees in each case are independent, although the film commissions have catalogues listing private owners who offer their properties for shoots.

aspect in filming locations leads to the fact that the three aspects highlighted and expanded upon in the Spain Film Commission webpages are locations, tax incentives and professionals (<http://www.shootinginspain.info/>).

7 Conclusions and future lines of research

As of the 1950s, our country was transformed into a territory for filming movies. The arrival of foreign productions and the development of a national film industry –initially with obvious budgetary differences– has converted Spain into one of the countries in the world with the most exterior shootings.

The study of how filming locations have evolved by year corresponds to the dissemination patterns for production that was initially concentrated in Madrid. This progressively gave way, particularly in the second half of the 1990s, to a more balanced distribution throughout the rest of the national territory.

The country's geographic conditions, the abundance of coastal and strikingly diverse interior landscapes, together with a benign yet varied climate, in a territory of scarcely more than a half a million square kilometers, makes Spain well deserving of being termed a "small continent". But these conditions of the physical medium, although necessary, are not effective if we do not add facilities for financing, a government and administration disposed to use Spain's rich architectural heritage, and the existence of film production support technicians.

The distribution of the shootings is not uniform throughout the territory and in the cities, accentuating the differences among various zones. Madrid's presence together with its area of influence has always been noteworthy, although, it undoubtedly has diminished in weight with respect to the filming shoots before the 1990s. Together with the foregoing, there is a phenomenon of "coastalization", a shift to coastal areas, particularly evident in the Mediterranean, as opposed to the less filmed interior and some specialized productions. Finally, a small group of mid-sized cities, located in the interior of the peninsula, vie to present themselves as appropriate filming locations for historical movies or as a provincial city. From the aforementioned, we can glean the importance of having more recent audiovisual productions that project an updated and contemporary image of these cities, quite far removed from the cliché of the historical or provincial city.

The limited dispersion of the shooting locations by movie can be confirmed, since more than two-thirds of film productions shoot their exterior scenes within one sole province. On the negative

side of this spatial distribution, a large number of cities in the selected sample, have not been filmed.

The distribution of the filming locations entails multiple factors. Among them, positive correlations have been confirmed between film shoots and population size. This same correlation is seen in the link between the intensity of filming with cities that hold the most attraction for tourists and visitors because of their cultural clout. Furthermore, the dissemination of the city through film appears to also be consolidated by its mention in social networks, thereby reinforcing the attractiveness of these cities for the prospective foreign visitor.

The distribution of the filming locations is based on numerous geographical factors, linked to the particular features of the cities or their suitability for filming. However, it also seems to be related to having a high density of institutions like film commissions and film offices. Concurrences between the filming map and these entities show that both processes enhance one another: on one hand, it seems logical that film commissions and film offices appear, precisely, in those territories where there is a greater number of movies filmed, especially if we look at the ones with the highest ratings and dissemination among the national and international public. On the other hand, it is clear that the existence of these organisms, spurs on new film shoots, precisely in these cities.

There are several lines of research that can be developed from this introductory study.

- First, there are other ways to spatially analyze these movies that could later be verified in further research studies; for example, through segmenting the sample according to the different ranges of city size (metropolitan areas, small or mid-size cities) in which movies have been filmed.
- Along these lines, it would be useful to verify the effectiveness of film commissions and film offices, that is, confirm if establishment-in some cases fairly recently - of these entities and their efforts to secure shoots, has or has not represented a substantial increase in the cities' cinematographic activity. In short, overseeing public expenditure and its transfer to society and the economy and implementing new strategies in those territories which have not been sufficiently reflected in order to create a film office.
- The cinematography panorama shown here is in some way incomplete. This is partly because a sample of 178 movies was used that does not encompass all the audiovisual productions filmed in Spain. However, it is also because our work has been limited to cities. Thus, what is lacking is analysis of rural spaces and natural landscapes, since cities are just one of the

elements of territory. Although there are in fact studies that analyze rural sociological characteristics in Spanish cinema, in this case what we are referring to is research that explores filming locations corresponding to this type of feature-length films. This aspect is important because some of the scenes with most impact in the movies and series disseminated abroad take place precisely in these spaces. Indeed, a review of the Spain Film Commission, aimed at attracting shootings to our country, reveals how it espouses the country's spectacular rural and natural landscapes. We must highlight that from a cinematographic perspective, cities and rural spaces are not antagonistic territories, but instead often complement one another in the same filming.

- Finally, study must be undertaken of the Spain that is not projected on the screen, or to be more precise, the Spain that is less disseminated abroad. The question needs to be raised about how to foment visibility of its urban areas and cities. It would be important, first, to analyze its causes and remedies, especially when we are able to verify that cinematographic projection is a powerful tool for strengthening cultural tourism by disseminating, within the context of a narrative, images of a city's architectural heritage. In the 21st century, national and international tourists head to their destinations based on images they have consumed before departing. The endeavors of the Spain Film Commission, or film commissions in the autonomous communities and local film offices transcend the strictly cinematographic and enter into that of the territory or city brand or image, and is, as such, an essential aspect. However, we must also point to possibly formulating tax breaks and more specific policies for filming incentives, in what refers to the territorial area, than those currently undertaken by the Autonomous Regions. Undoubtedly, one of the first measures is precisely, providing the viewer with cinematographic products (movies or TV series) that incorporate daily experiences and storylines with an imaginary and visual content from the urban areas of these very territories.

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