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The Evolution of a Practice in Trialectic Space: An Approach Inclusive of Norms and Performance.

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Abstract

Practice theory has lately taken a turn towards modelling the evolution of practices, which appear situated at the centre of the study of social action. I argue in this paper, following previous criticisms, that such centrality can be revised in order to better incorporate elements of agency and normativity, which are much determinant of the emergence and development of practices. The aim of this paper is to propose an alternative heuristic which advances on lefebvrean trialectics, in order to better account for process in the study of practices. For this I rely on previous concepts from anthropology and sociology, such as fetishisation, ritualisation and bricolage. A relevant case study is merely outlined in order to illustrate how such a conceptual framework can identify agencies and situate practices in relation to power structures and performance at an early stage within the research process.

Keywords: *Practice theory, trialectics, fetishisation, ritualisation, bricolage, costalero.*

Introduction

Continuing Bourdieu's seminal work, and building greatly on Wittgenstein's contributions, several authors continue to develop Practice Theory along conceptual models that situate practices at the centre of the study of social action. The discussion has lately taken a turn towards exploring mechanisms of genesis and evolution of practices, particularly in the case of the works of Schatzki (2013a) and Shove et al. (2012). I argue in this paper, following criticisms by Warde (2014), that such centrality can be revised in order to better incorporate elements of agency and normativity that are determinant of the emergence and development of practices.

The aim of this paper is to propose an additional analysis heuristic based on Lefebvrian theory, to better account for the evolution of practices. In the first section I discuss the gaps in recent work in considering either the role of individual contributions or that of strategic thinking, both of which contain a great deal of drive for change. I then identify the study of dynamics as a means to approach the in-between ontologies of practice, eventually to elaborate on some relevant requirements for an operative analytical framework. I propose to build this on Lefebvrian trialectics. In earlier work, I explored processes of change and transference between the practiced, represented, and representational spaces in Lefebvre's spatial triad, in order to account for the evolution of urban space (Torres García, 2017). These have their bases in concepts drawn on the social sciences: Bricolage, fetishisation and ritualisation. In the second section, in order to give an example, I apply this framework to a particular social collective which, in a course of events that is still in development, at the same time has preserved and strongly modified traditional practices; that of religious float porters in Seville, Spain.

Analysing practices along processes of change allows identifying their key elements and material agencies. It thus facilitates narrowing the analytical scope and allocating research resources, but most of all, it permits situating power relations and affective drives that greatly condition the evolution of a practice, its assimilation into normative spaces, and its utilisation for the performance of individual and collective identities.

Decentring practice theory

A now consolidated branch of social and cultural theory, practice theory has experienced notable developments lately, to a great extent characterised by giving a preeminent position to practice as the 'smallest unit' of study instead of discourses, interactions, or ideas (Reckwitz, 2002b). It is not the aim of this paper to argue against giving practices such centrality as much as to point out that such a standpoint disregards important dynamics, particularly in the case of recent key pieces of literature which pay attention to mechanisms of emergence and evolution of practices. My argument connects with recurrent critiques to practice theory for overlooking aspects of habituation and institutionalisation (cf. Warde, 2014), as well as for its apolitical bias. In this paper I maintain that this is a result of the excessively preeminent role that leading authors such as Schatzki (1997, 2012, 2013a) and Shove et al. (2012) give practices within the study of social action. These works do not fully profit from contributions made by socioconstructivist and neo-Marxist traditions, especially those from the perspective of Lefebvrian trialectics, according to which social space is the confluence of spaces of representation, represented spaces, and practiced spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). For instance,

Shove et al (2012) barely reference Lefebvre - merely in relation to rhythm analysis - or de Certeau.

Therefore, an additional aim of this paper is to open up a line for the development of analytical frameworks for practice based research on the trialectical approach, a scaffold for narratives that are both analytical and descriptive, based not only in the current state of a given practice, but in its historical, material, and somatic contexts. Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space, similar to de Certeau's (1990) or Arendt's idea of action (Arendt, 1958, p. 323), relies on the socio-constructionist and post-Hegelian notion of trialectics. In his view, social space is not a given entity. It is rather composed by objects and relations which belong to normative spaces, those of everydayness, and those ideal or imaginary, and which evolve in spatio-temporal configurations. Historiography is thus an important element in Lefebvre's theorisations, and it continuously reappears in his writings, hinting at the important role that dynamics, evolution, have in his model.

This processual dimension underlines the importance of understanding how practices emerge and into what they turn when they do not just fade. Shove et al. (2012) consider how practices merge, split and transform; Schatzki (2011, 2015) draws a slightly vaguer picture of practices contingently forming bundles and constellations as they detach from a *plenum* composed of all existing practices. The dynamics they portray are invariably confined to the practical space, following the premise that practices are the most central and elemental component of social action. But can practices evolve into normative spaces? Can they engender spheres of individual performance? Is the agency of people limited to their role as carriers, or need we account for the subversion of practices and underlying discourses? Can rules become accepted, embodied and acted out unconsciously or uncritically? Can once singular idiosyncratic performances be adopted and repeated until they become commonplace?

Debates around Practice: Evolution and Tactics vs. Strategy

Shove et al. (2012) give exhaustive detail about how continuous repetition informs practices and underpins their evolution, but they do not take into account important notions of identity and creativity contained in the concept of performance (cf. Butler, 1990; Gregson & Rose, 2000). They base their analytical framework on two main designs; firstly, that practices are basically composed of *materials*, *meanings*, and *skills and competences*, thus streamlining and overcoming the original overlap between Bourdieu's concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *illusio*. Secondly, practices are conceptually dual, and can be understood both as the ensemble and as every one of its discreet executions. Practices can therefore be approached by means of typological analyses similar to those that architects and architectural historians have applied to the study of architecture - especially the vernacular and the domestic - during the last four decades. Consequently, in their model a single performance within a whole practice is understood as an ontological vehicle rather than an agent in the dynamics of perfecting, 'splitting, merging and recombining' practices (Shove et al., 2012, p. 102). These authors pose snowboarding as example, picturing how moves and tricks give shape to a practice as they are incorporated and repeated by different collectives. This practise conditions how a practical ensemble's evolution is portrayed, which seems to focus largely on the group dynamics of the people who either adhere to or deter from it. Shove et al.'s model fails to fully include the representational value of an individual's take on such moves; that is, how individuals contribute to the practice by contributing idiosyncrasies in their performance – beyond

mere repetition – and, furthermore, using the practice as a canvas against which to assert their personality.

Indeed, individuals do not only repeat and perfect practices (cf Rouse, 2007; Taylor, 1985), each interpretation rehearses differential innovations that condition their evolution. This becomes clear in the oft-recurred examples of snowboarding (Shove et al., 2012), skateboarding (Borden, 2001) or their practical forebear, surf. They are also particularly suitable illustrations of the importance of ‘style’, and how the development of practices is often contingent on the contributions of individuals who use rules and common praxis as foils to assert their distinctiveness. Technical prowess in the execution of a practice is often not the only consideration in assessing its social value, but also the capacity to take this practice beyond, to express difference within sameness and to create liminal spaces, understanding these as propositional, ground-breaking or bridging instances within an evolution (Broadhurst, 2004; Ellis, 2004). Rule and deviance, normative and alternative spaces, go hand in hand, neither one existing without the other (cf Wittgenstein 1953 in Rouse, 2007 on the interpretation of rules; also Shove et al., 2012 on the incapacity of rules to fully prescribe practices). It is in this continuing transaction, and in the overwhelming flows of affects (Anderson, 2006, 2009; Giaccardi & Fogli, 2008; Thrift, 2004) liberated in it, that practice, performance and representation evolve. Returning to skateboarding as a validated instance, figures such as skater Jay Adams have been singled out by his peers as heterodox ‘seed’ individuals whose importance resided in that they pushed the practice forward (Hardwicke, 2005).

Giving practice a preeminent position in the sphere of social action also risks giving strategic thinking too low a profile. Practical mechanics permeate all decision-making, but this does not mean that no rational or rationalised, prospective discourses are consciously articulated. Here, I turn to the distinction between tactics and strategies made by de Certeau (1990; and especially clear in Brunson, Baldwin, & Goldberg, 1994), who situates them within different temporal and purpose frameworks. Schatzki (2013b) draws on Heidegger for establishing a differential understanding of the relation between action and time, and the divergence between linear and rhythmic understandings of time-action is also present in key authors like Lefebvre (2004), Arendt (1958), or Debord (1996). Whereas tactics are identified with reproduction and everydayness, and act out cycles of activity in order to reproduce known outcomes, strategies are commonly associated with production and temporal-spatial arrangements along which novel results are planned for and purposefully sought. Strategies and tactics are nevertheless co-dependent: Tactics are important building blocks of strategies, which rely on chains of ready-made operations in order to achieve objectives. At the same time, many tactics are in turn the product of strategic approaches. Thus, disciplinary regimes can break down and organise action in support of concrete discourses, and then pack it and infuse it into individuals or collectives as embodied knowledge. In Foucault’s account (1971, 1975) this is achieved through ‘hard’ taxonomies and orthopaedics, whereas in Preciado’s (2008, 2013) it is via ‘soft’ molecular and networked pharmaco-pornographic technologies. Rouse (2000, p. 203) specifically highlights the need for a dynamic understanding of the relation between practice and power.

This is not to say that aspects of normativity or performance do not receive any attention. Quite on the contrary, rule-following and the role of discreet instances of general practices are commonplace in prominent texts within the ‘practice turn’ (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2000; Stern, 2003), although practices are often axiomatically situated at the

centre of the picture (cf. Bloor, 2000; Rouse, 2007). Giving practice a central role not necessarily overlooks the normative and the performative but I argue here, in line with Warde (2014), that it restricts the capacity to recognise their role in the shaping of practices, and it reduces a study's capacity to identify collective and individual agencies, as well as power structures (Rouse, 2000). An analytical framework must face these recurrent conundrums regarding practice study.

(Im)materiality and In-Between Ontologies.

As a consequence of their problematic ontologies, practices are difficult to grasp, isolate and document. Practices occur between the material and the abstract; they only materially exist whilst being executed but in the interim they are preserved as know-how; and they involve a broad range of objects, operations and moves that adapt continuously to their contexts. Recent advances have focused abundantly on the relationship with materiality, benefitting in particular from Latour's work and Actor-Network Theory, in order to draw bidirectional rapports and flat ontologies. It thus becomes apparent that practices shape the surrounding world, and in turn respond to material agencies, ranging from the individual and collective bodies, objects and material culture, and the natural environment (Bennett, Dodsworth, Noble, Poovey, & Watkins, 2013, p. 7 and f.). Such a materialist approach has been put forward by non-representational geographies (Thrift, 2007), which remain under scrutiny (Lorimer, 2005; Waterton, 2014), and which exposes another common pitfall of practice theory, an inherent inability to discriminate between the manifold aspects of a practice at an early stage in the empirical research, so as to concentrate the (limited) research resources on significant features (e.g. Latham & McCormack, 2009).

Objects, tools, or vehicles can therefore be reversed-engineered to reconstruct extinct practices, to bridge the gap between the timeframes of practice and those of science (Bourdieu, 1980), or to relate otherwise unconnected data. Nevertheless, even though materiality is employed as an entry point to the characterisation of practices, it likely does not suffice for a significant part of them. Not only practices are ephemeral, some of their objects and material attributes might be as well. Some of them decay or are consumed during the practice, leaving no traces or equivocal ones, while some survive the evolution of practices and reappear in different contexts (Shove et al., 2012). There are objects which take a preeminent role and condition the recognisability of a practice, while others can disappear or be replaced without compromising a practice's identity (Schatzki, 2012). An added problem is the life history of material agencies. The presence of agency in objects is now widely accepted, and thoroughly embedded in practice theory that draws on actor-network theory, but questions follow: how are objects invested with this agency? In what circumstances can it be modified or extinguished? An effective analysis method must provide the tools for recognising and prioritising among the different objects and agencies intervening in a practice.

Besides materiality, know-how is another pillar of the current understanding of practice. It is equally hard to grasp, not only due to the complexity of observation or testimony-based data gathering methods, but also because as soon as a practice is documented it ceases to be embodied knowledge to become a text. It is then no longer subjected to continuous micro-changes and adaptation to the tensions between body and environment (Fuller, 1993 in Rouse, 2007), but becomes a fixed intellectualised figure, susceptible of criticism such as Bourdieu's (1979; Stern, 2003, p. 187 and f.) and Turner's (Rouse, 2007; Schatzki, 1997; Turner, 1994). It can be argued that documenting a particular activity is not

prescriptive per se, but when an action is incorporated into a symbol system, dimensions of it become settled as pieces of text, which from that moment on establish a different relationship with time and memory (Arendt, 1958).

These are intermediate ontological states for which an improved analytical framework needs to account. Main authors suggest that practice and action in a more general sense are situated at an in-between space (cf. Ortner, 1984). Giddens conceptually places action in between agency and structure, and it is difficult to draw a line between Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and field (Dewey, 2002 in Bennett et al., 2013, p. 12; King, 2000). When Shove et al. portray practices as both performances and entities, they situate their analytical stance at varying points in between the actual and the abstract and, in adhering to a radical understanding of actor-network theory, they consider materials not as mere components of arrangements (Schatzki, 2012) but in flowing continuity with the body (also cf. Ginev, 2014; Reckwitz, 2002b, 2002a). It has also been a matter of discussion whether, or to what extent, action and practices continuously evolve in time (Rouse, 2007, p. 506 and f.), a factor that can only be taken into account by relying on narrative formulation and flexible analytical stances.

Despite not yet having produced concrete methodologies, Lefebvorean trialectics are employed in the study of space, of the city in particular (e.g. Borden, 2001; Leary, 2013; Soja, 1996), precisely for its capacity to conjugate practical, performance, and normative dimensions. I do not only defend that these two additional 'spaces' must be given a similar weight to that of practices but, further, that they can provide necessary entry points to the specific study of everydayness, and at the same time facilitate overcoming the difficulties that its mercurial nature poses for its research. But Lefebvre's often intricate, rich, and overwhelming style makes it difficult to elicit a method, and in spite of the apparent intelligibility of the basic concepts of trialectics, they can unexpectedly turn elusive when examined in detail. In order to also account for in-between states, in this article I propose a framework to break down the evolution of a social space into three basic dynamics by virtue of which elements belonging to the represented, representational, and practiced spaces recombine. Being able to track how their components evolve over time allows singling out the materialities, relationships, and agencies that are determinant of each space. I draw on several concepts from anthropology and sociology to characterise such processes. *Bricolage* stands for the formulation of practices from previous relations and experience; *ritualisation*, for the development of norms; and *fetishisation* for the investing of symbolism and representational value. The following section develops these concepts and grounds them on a case study.

An alternative model for the analysis of social action

For the sake of illustration, in this section I expose one aspect of the religious processions that take place in Seville, Spain. I will focus on the recent evolution of *costaleros*, the men who carry the floats on which religious icons are displayed. This collective has undergone one of the most significant changes in the recent development of local religious brotherhoods in Seville, and one that I have witnessed myself to some extent, which allows me to draw on my own life-time observations in order to build the following narrative. As an example, it might appear quite extemporaneous, but other than being a phenomenon of manageable size, suitable for the purpose of this paper, it combines a strong element of tradition and, contrary to intuition, a considerable amount of change which extends to nowadays. It therefore brings out questions about the rapports between

material and immaterial heritage, about debates regarding their preservation and change, and their implications for power exercise, the creation of symbolical value, and the development of different agencies in and through urban space.

In terms of methodology, an analytical framework based on trialectics can accommodate a wide range of qualitative approaches, provided that the study embraces and triangulates a variety of strategies for analysis and data-gathering. A reading of Lefebvre (1991, 2014) and de Certeau (1990) suggests that a combination of hermeneutics and historiography can relate practices and the contexts in which they emerge and evolve. Data gathering must not be limited to texts but also material and spatial features via surveys, graphic, and especially morpho-typological studies. Different levels of auto-ethnography and self-reflection account for the body, relations to space and materiality, the representational and, ultimately, affects (cf. Anderson, 2009; Franks, 2016; Gregson & Rose, 2000; Rose, Degen, & Basdas, 2010), placing all of them at the reader's reach. The inclusion of normative and performative spaces calls for discourse analysis in order to identify underlying practices (cf. Ginev, 2014; Holtorf, 2015) as well as the construction and survival of memory.

The elaboration of the analysis cannot be separated from narrative building, which in turn calls for considerations of reflexivity and positionality (Rose, 1997; Skeggs, 2002). Over the last ten years biographical narratives have gained momentum in landscape studies, a particularly suitable object for multidisciplinary study in the sense of involving discourses, agencies, and material arrangements (Kolen, Renes, & Hermans, 2015; Kolen & Witte, 2006). A lesson learned from this umbrella approach is that a practice and its narrative cannot be decoupled, firstly because, as I argue above, texts can both inform and be informed by practices, and secondly because any description is the result of a discursive process, and therefore situated in the intersection of different practical spheres (cf. Holtorf, 2015).

For the remainder of this paper I draw mainly on secondary sources, press, and my own lifetime experience. I am aware of having an ambivalent position as insider and outsider to this particular social phenomenon, although I do not delve into these matters for the sake of succinctness, as my intention is to provide a brief but illustrative example. This curtails the possibility to use participant methods or interviewing, to further triangulate data, and to reach more rigorous results. If this case study were to be extended along those directions, considerations on positionality and reflexivity would need to be more thoroughly addressed.

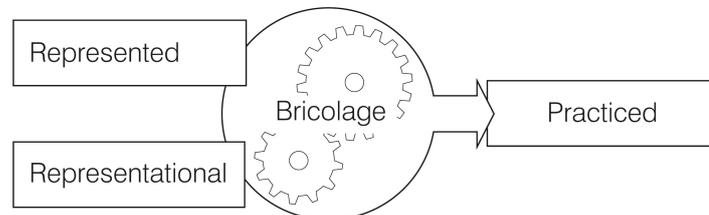
Bricolage – A solution for appropriating the streets

I use the term bricolage in reference to the process by means of which a practice is created. Building a practical discourse stands out as a fundamental operation allowing to gain a hold over otherwise undifferentiated space, to give it a meaning, and ultimately to bring it under one's domination. In Counter-Reformation Seville, realising the spatial project of a religious procession needed one basic element – carriers who would transport the religious icons through the city streets, thus rendering them practicable to the liturgy. Levi-Strauss (1966) formulated bricolage as a mechanism for the creation of myths, which aim to give the (perceived) world a practical rationale (also Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 17). This concept has been revised in a post-structuralism context, mainly in order to weigh the effect of agendas behind myth studies during the 19th and 20th centuries (Patton & Doniger, 1996). Furthermore, the actual extent and reach of the concept of myth remain

contested (Segal, 1996; cf. Eliade, 1963), but the value of bricolage, as a tool for analysing collective behaviour, still stands (cf. Douglas, 1966; and Dundes, 1996 for projection and projective inversion). As a social structure extends over unfamiliar space, it uses a limited 'even if extensive' (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17) amount of cultural elements at hand. Bits and pieces of a culture are used to turn unfamiliar space-time into practiced space-time. In the same way, elements of the latter encountered during the process are incorporated into the dominant narrative for additional support, in a re-territorialisation process. This is one manner in which spaces and objects have agency in place-making, as they are limited and their availability conditions possible spatial formulations.

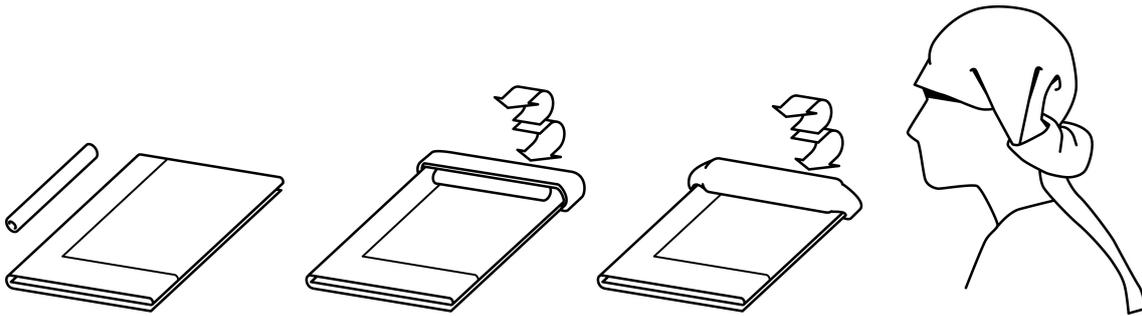
I then define bricolage as a part of a place-making process in which distinct individual or collective agents put a set of cultural and physical references into play, both inherited and encountered. In my understanding, bricolage thus stands for the formulation of Lefebvre's practiced space, introducing agents, material, conceptual, representative and affective ensembles into a given time-space in order to appropriate it (Fig. 1).

Figure 1:



Elements from represented and representational spaces result in practiced spaces.

Faced with the practicalities of territorialising the streets of Seville following a religious ideal, in which carrying heavy structures along lengthy itineraries was a key issue, a bricolage was put in place. Originally this used to be the task of professionals: Crews of *stevedores* from the port and porters from marketplaces supplemented their income during the holidays working for the religious fraternities (Franco del Valle, 1997). Their duties did not differ from their everyday jobs. Out of sight beneath the paces, they were part of the unseen rigs that made possible the coming to life of the religious ideal. Accordingly, the *costaleros* dressed comfortably in work clothes and footwear, and behaved discreetly. Their only distinguishable garment was the *costal*, a cushioned cloth headpiece used in their daily work, which was in turn adapted to the floats internal structure. This utensil has been in use at least from the 17th Century (Gavala González, 2009), and was originally fashioned from two cloth sacks, affordable objects readily available for this kind of workers, rolled and folded so as to craft a transition between a wooden stretcher structure and the heads and necks of the porters (see Fig. 2).

Figure 2:*Assemblage and wearing of a costal.*

The *costal* was only one of the pieces that were assembled as a solution to the problem of carrying religious icons across the city streets. Another one was the discipline of crews led by foremen, taken from the organisation and hierarchies of the docks. These groups were referred as *gallegos* (Galicians). The female term *gallegas* was used in former times to refer to immigrant prostitutes (Perry, 2012), hinting that *costaleros* came from the most humble backgrounds in Modern Era Seville and were ‘the underclass of [Seville’s] Holy Week’ (Burgos Belinchón, 1972, p. 13). The bricolage displayed along Seville Streets gathered not only material arrangements, but also prior practices, rules, and organisational schemes from, and representative of, the already existing class and production relations in the city.

Fetishisation – a Lost Practice Becomes a Symbol.

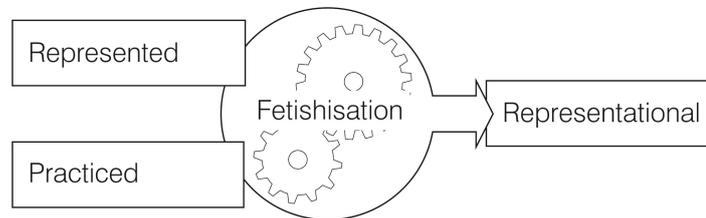
Materiality reveals a complex rapport to absence when objects or spaces lose their objective value, transcend their original purpose, and attain social relevance. The disappearance of professional porter crews meant a reformulation of the figure of the *costalero* and its place within the rite, in which tradition and the representational sphere were as important as the practicalities.

The concept of fetish was originally coined to describe objects that were invested with magical powers (Ellen, 1988; Pels, 1998), but it evolved within anthropology into having a definition grounded on cultural processes: ‘*Fetishism (...) is by definition a displacement of meaning through synecdoche, the displacement of the object of desire onto something else through processes of disavowal*’ (Gamman & Makinen, 1994, p. 45 in Dant, 1996, p. 5). For Marx the concept characterises the capital’s drive to gather property, commodities or money, as ends regardless of their use-value (in Dant, 1996; Ellen, 1988). Baudrillard (1981 [1970]), who focuses on the production of signs, considers Marx’s use of the term reductionist and biased by rationalist anthropology, even morally judgemental. For him, the fetishised object is no longer a referent for itself, but instead stands for the system of values that produces it (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 92).

In fetishisation the social value of objects, spaces and practices overcome their original purpose or use-value (cf. Pinch, 1998) and they are invested with symbolical and affective content. In other words, they are transferred agency. There is a both positive and negative evolution involved in this process, by means of which an object loses its ancillary understanding so as to embody a socio-political sign. An illustration is Bernbeck’s (2013) work on the relationship between the loss of cultural signs and their subsequent exaltation as symbols -*deheritagisation* and *reheritagisation* (Veschambre, 2004, cf. 2005). I favour

the term fetishisation, in spite of its connoted and contested meaning, because it detaches from particular formulations of ‘heritage’ in institutional policy (Edensor, 2005), in favour of a broader idea of upscale reformulation of the social value of spaces, practices and objects (Fig. 3).

Figure 3:



Elements from represented and practiced spaces result in representational spaces.

Fetishisation relates to ritualisation and the sacred. Periods of change compel social structures to both contain and preserve practices and, as I will expose in the following subsection, devise them as rituals that draw a sense of continuity over time. As in myth-making, these rituals include material and symbolical features, cultural ‘bricks’ which bond to given imagined and affective universes. By virtue of this process, when threatened by dereliction, oblivion, or loss of purpose or memory, spaces, practices and objects become fetishised, they are invested agency within the system (cf. Ellen, 1988, pp. 229-232). Representational spaces are created around them that incarnate the social structure at large; they stand for ‘the system as such’ (Baudrillard, 1981, p. cit.).

This was the case in Seville’s Holy Week, as a result of the mechanisation of heavy work and other socioeconomic changes during the second half of the 20th century. Professional porters became scarce and the crews found themselves in the position to lobby for better working conditions. Since the 1970s fraternities increasingly resorted to their own members in order to avoid conflict and reduce expenses, leading to important changes in the nature and role of the *costaleros*. Consequently, and in spite of these structural changes and the total disappearance of traditional load-bearing techniques, much of their craft remained invariable, fossilised within the religious liturgy. Why did this practical understanding not disappear with its original arrangements and the context in which they developed?

Although I have not known Seville’s Holy Week prior to these changes, my first memories of these men portray an attitude that reflected their utilitarian origins. I remember them walking the streets inconspicuously, carrying their *costales* folded under their arms, only to wear them minutes before starting their shift. Some of them wore girdles, and they only stripped to their undershirts and rolled up their trouser legs in order to negotiate the hot, tight spaces under the pace. The informed eye could spot them in the crowd long after the holidays had passed, by the characteristically swollen wound at the base of their neck.

All of these features became fetishised. No alternative device or carrying techniques to those of the *costal* were developed, in spite of their inefficiency and the severe trauma they inflict on the porters (Jiménez Espinosa & Bonito Gadella, 2005). For a brief period, following conflicts with professional crews, there was an initiative to mechanise the floats (Franco del Valle, 1997), which was swiftly disregarded as it doubtlessly would have

obliterated a considerable amount of ethnological heritage. As brothers took the place of *costaleros*, the once pragmatic accessories turn into symbols of devotion and of their new social status; hence the *costal* is worn outside the pace and its lacerations – known in the jargon as *tomate* – are sported with pride. Today, *costales* can be purchased online which sport vintage brand prints on their sackcloth, recreating their industrial, makeshift origins at a start price around the €40 mark. Undergarment shirts and girdles made of traditional materials are common, and purists wear espadrilles for shoes.

These are no longer merely affordable and readily-available technologies at the service of the task at hand, but are rather meant to perpetuate the form of the procession and to stage fetishised relations between bodies, icons, streets, and audience. Indeed, these elements, and especially the *costal*, contribute to preserving the way the floats move and rock to the music, the hissing sound of shoes sliding on the pavement, the rhythm set by resting periods, and the rapport between pain, penitence, and faith inherited from Counter-Reformation. Their referent is now the performance itself and, within it, elements of former practice have become embedded, preserved to some extent, but also modified along specific and revealing discourses. This performative – representational – space transcends the temporal and spatial boundaries of the Holy Week, and constructs particular social types and hyper-masculinised gender paradigms (Fernández Angulo, 2008) within Sevillian society, which are rehearsed all-year-round on the streets, at dedicated taverns, and within other semi-public settings (fig. 4).

Figure 4:

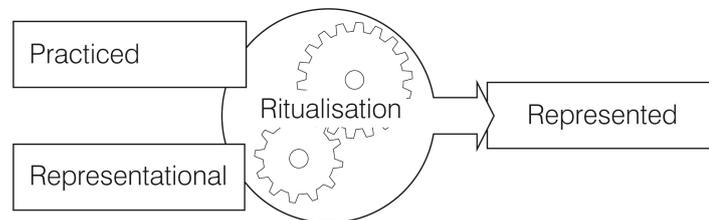


A porter. © Joaquín Márquez Correa (Creative Commons)

Ritualisation – forging a new power balance.

The fact that a different social group joined this particular practice not only meant its continuity, but a rearrangement of some of its characteristics. An originally practiced space has become not only symbolical, but also a normative realm which to a point subverts the previous establishment. The process by means of which a *status quo* becomes established is seldom discussed; it involves social codes, social bodies in motion and the space over which they move, the practical, and the performative (Schechner, 2003, p. 44). The main references on social practice theory consider these factors but, in a way, under static conditions. Bourdieu (1979), de Certeau (1990), Butler (1990) and Schechner (2003) explore practice and performance within given social constraints, which Foucault (1975) identified as overarching discourses and knowledge structures. My use of the term *ritualisation* transcends a static relation. I see ritualisation as a derivative of Lefebvrian represented space (Fig. 5), it is the process through which the binomial performance-practice is constructed as memory and ‘closed down’ to contestation (Massey 1995 in Edensor, 2005, p. 830).

Figure 5:



Elements from practiced and representational spaces spawn represented spaces.

In providing a consolidated picture of the debate on boundaries within anthropology, Bell (1992) ultimately stresses the relationship between rituals and power structures. Also Boyer and Liénard (2006) study rituals and put them in relation to ideas of contamination and perceived risk. Therefore ritualisation, on the one hand, stands for the consolidation of internal power relations and, on the other, averts perceived risks and contamination from the outside. It manifests in both defining a social core and protecting its integrity. When a social group extends over a territory, ritualisation can operate in two ways. Firstly, as an ensemble of elements of a given social structure (pieces, objects or discourses) used as reference to a central ideal (cf. Eliade, 1959); this overlaps with the bricolage concept explained above. Alternatively, when a social structure claims space through repetition and periodicity it constructs a place’s memory, and symbolically appropriates space by establishing practice and performance (Agudo Torrico, 1993, cf. 1996; Bernabé Salgueiro, 1999; Ripoll & Veschambre, 2005; Veschambre, 2004).

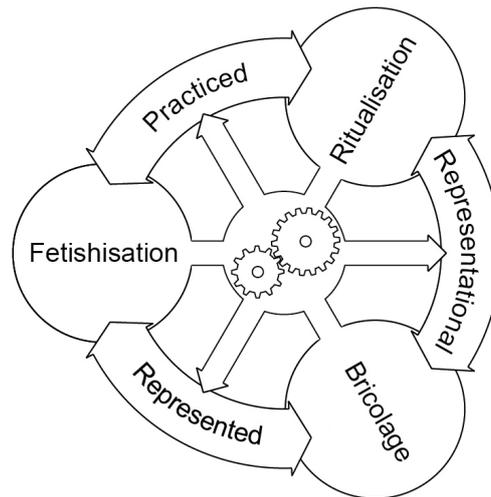
These two modes of ritualisation relate to the concepts of appropriation and domination, which Lefebvre (1996, pp. 174–179) opposes as modes of territorialisation that correspond to the practical and the representative, respectively. These are vectors, of my understanding, of power and practice, but I take a Foucauldian stance in alignment with Bell (1992). In my reading of these terms, appropriation rather refers to the process of which domination is an outcome. The difference resides in that practiced space exists only when acted out, whereas represented space seeks permanence. It is not a question of instances of power (Butler, 2012, p. 145) but rather of where a particular power (social)

structure stands in relation to its own becoming - in what stage it is between existing or not.

Returning to our Sevillian case study, the most obvious aspect of ritualisation is the transformation of the *costalero*'s outfit into a uniform. Rolled-up trousers, t-shirts, and fleeces are no longer makeshift work clothes. They are now customised in order to reflect the crew's unity and belonging. The use of standard clothing reveals the intention to establish their practice. Furthermore, their clothes now sport the fraternities' emblems, situating individual carriers within a social group and grounding them within a tradition. Much of their behaviour has also become normalised, and they train their moves off-season on the streets, making their presence conspicuous. They meet socially at specific spaces where their behaviours are greatly ritualised, normally around religious music and local beer. Through all this social interaction, they forge life-lasting loyalties, sometimes compared to those formed in military service (Franco del Valle, 1997). A body of dedicated literature such as blogs, local chronicles, festivity announcements, etc. has played a major role in rooting their behaviour in tradition, sketching a history of prominent crews and foremen who have given shape to current practice. They also prescribe typical *costalero* behaviour, selectively singling out virtues such as comradeship, devotion, and discipline as distinctive, as well as sanctioning the use of a specific jargon (Burgos Belinchón, 1972; Carrero Rodríguez, 1996; Franco del Valle, 1997).

Institutionalisation reaches further beyond, but I focus here on the elements inherited from former practice. In any case, this display of ritual behaviour responds to the compulsive need of situating and establishing this new social class within the Holy Week and Sevillian society at large, given that its emergence has brought about a shift in power relations. Aware of their importance to the smooth development of the festivities, the crews of carriers contend with the traditional hierarchies for influence within the fraternities, whose sway occasionally extends to the city's governance. The latter are based in seniority, social affiliation, and political skills, whereas belonging to the former involve somewhat conflicting determining factors, such as strength and youth. Due to changes in the social context this new collective surfaced and claimed a place in the social scheme. In spite of their regard for tradition, new attitudes have brought changes upon their practice. Not only they have become more visible on the streets as a social group, the motion of the floats is now more florid, and their performance more varied and refined. Their routine can no longer be considered just a craft, but also an underlying statement which exploits elements of practice and performance: Arts and symbols enmeshed in a continuous recombination of practiced, represented, and representational spaces (Fig. 6).

Figure 6:



The three dimensions of social space are in constant re-arrangement.

Concluding thoughts

I have presented briefly the costaleros' craft as a case study of a practice situated in the confluence of different spaces: It is part of the local religious liturgy and the Roman Catholic's at large; it belongs to a long-gone ensemble of practices from Seville's docks, but it also fits in the current construction of gender identity, power structures, or urban tribes. It is a narrative that reflects class struggle as well as a drive for territorialising Seville's streets.

Instead of breaking action down into its 'soft' and 'hard' components, I have sliced it along the lines of represented, representational, and practiced spaces, following Lefebvre. I have used de Certeau's (1990) '*découper et retourner*' to isolate certain recurrent elements (e.g. the *costal*) and enquiring on their role in different contexts. Finally, I have used a historical framework not in order to draw a causality line, but rather to characterise change, and convey in it the essential aspects of a practice, even though it has undergone radical changes. Distinguishing between processes of ritualisation, fetishisation, and bricolage facilitates building an account of an evolution in which different levels of individual, collective, and material agency become highlighted. It also relieves to a great extent the problem of intellectualisation and objectification, as it breaks down a practice into elementary components and renders them available to the reader's scrutiny.

An important issue with practice studies and connected fields such as non-representational theory is the ability to single out, early in the research process, elements of a practice that are determinant in its rise and evolution. The *costal* emerges from within this narrative as a fulcrum. It is both the result and the source of a practice; it originally developed as part of a bricolage of pre-existing objects at hand, literally as *a fold* (Deleuze, 1993). It also did not continue to condition subsequent practice due to its objective advantages, but in virtue of its symbolical and performative value. The agency thus acquired manifests in influencing the porters' bodies, the motion of the floats, and the rhythm to which Seville's streets beat throughout the Holy Week. Eventually, the need to preserve an affective memory has turned it into a pillar of change in power structures.

Arguably, the costal belongs to a practice that has changed almost beyond recognition, but cannot be considered disappeared. The people who initiated it are long gone both as individuals and as collective, as are the social and productive contexts in which their craft was embedded. Nevertheless, moves, apparel, vocabulary, and props endure and continue to evolve, now enmeshed in symbolical performance, but undeniably there. It is in the nature of practice to change constantly and much inadvertently. The task of the analyst, which is to create a compelling description of a practice and its components, can benefit from a study of change at least as much as of a still of its elemental components. On this occasion, it grants an understanding of material features linked to much valued immaterial heritage. It also illustrates how the preservation of certain elements, once invested with symbolical value, drives changes not only within the practice but in power exercise on an urban scale. As mentioned above, it is not my intention here to exhaust this particular case study, which provides for a much extensive and thorough study (partly undertaken by Gavala González, 2009). This outline is meant as a suitable approach to the study of action, one able to determine which ones of the virtually infinite components of a practice are particularly significant and worth the allocation of research resources.

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