

## Touristification in historic cities: Reflections on Malaga

### *Turistificação em cidades históricas: Reflexões sobre Málaga*

#### **Daniel Barrera-Fernández**

Professor and researcher from the Autonomous University Benito Juárez de Oaxaca –  
UABJO, Oaxaca Juárez/Mexico  
E-mail: dbarrera.arqu@uabjo.mx

#### **Susana García Bujalance**

Associate Professor of the Urban Planning and Territory Planning of the School of  
Architecture of Malaga – UMA, Malaga/Spain  
E-mail: sgbujalance@uma.es

#### **Miriam Scalici**

Master degree in Architecture by the University of Palermo – UNIPA, Palermo/PA, Italy  
E-mail: miriamscalici14@gmail.com

*Article received on: 06-12-2018*

*Article approved on: 06-22-2019*

## ABSTRACT

This research analyses the consequences in the economy of the city, in the urban environment and in the life of residents affected by the massive arrival of tourists in the historic centre of Malaga in Andalusia, Spain. The research combines a mixed methodology consisting of analysis of urban plans and administrative documents, statistics, direct observation of tourism-related activities, the definition of a list of indicators and verification of their application in the case study. Mass tourism in a historic city is a cause of conflicts between visitors and residents, but there are also positive effects such as job creation, cosmopolitanism or the expansion of the cultural offer. This research shows that it is necessary to act on tourists-residents' conflicts in order to avoid the transformation of historic centres into places that expel the neighbours to give place to tourists. Planning and urban management, the active participation of citizens, as well as an awareness by the public administration, are key issues to avoid that historic centres become emptied of urban content to be turned into a scene for tourist consumption. This is the first research of the kind developed in the city of Malaga, one of the Spanish cities where tourism is growing faster, thus, the results could be applied to other cases in the same situation in the country and the Mediterranean.

**Keywords:** Touristification. Historic Centre. Gentrification. Urban Planning. Public Space.

## RESUMO

Esta pesquisa analisa as consequências na economia da cidade, no ambiente urbano e na vida dos moradores que são afetados pela chegada maciça de turistas no centro histórico de Málaga, na Andaluzia, Espanha. A pesquisa possui uma metodologia mista que consiste na análise de planos urbanísticos e documentos administrativos, estatísticas, observação direta de atividades relacionadas ao turismo, a definição de uma lista de indicadores e verificação de sua aplicação no estudo de caso. Turismo massivo em uma cidade histórica é a razão de conflitos entre visitantes e residentes, mas há também os aspectos positivos, como a geração de empregos, cosmopolitismo ou a expansão da oferta cultural. Esta pesquisa mostra que é necessário. Esta pesquisa mostra que é necessário atuar nos conflitos entre turistas e moradores, a fim de evitar a transformação dos centros históricos em lugares que expulsam os vizinhos para dar lugar aos turistas. Planejamento e gestão urbana, a ativa participação das cidades, bem como a conscientização da administração pública, são questões fundamentais para evitar que os centros históricos se esvaziem do conteúdo urbano para se transformar em cenário de consumo turístico. Esta é a primeira pesquisa do tipo desenvolvido na cidade de Málaga, uma das cidades espanholas onde o turismo está crescendo mais rápido, assim, os resultados poderiam ser aplicados a outros casos na mesma situação no país e no Mediterrâneo.

**Palavras-chave:** Turisrificação. Centro Histórico. Gentrificação. Planejamento Urbano. Espaço Público.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research is focused on the consequences and effects, both positive and negative, of mass tourism in Malaga, through the analysis of its impact on the economy of the city, on the urban environment and on the residents' daily life.

Tourism in historic city brings immediate positive effects such as job creation and the generation of a significant real estate income is an important source of income but it could have also negative consequences such as the loss of built heritage or the privatisation of public spaces. Mass tourism, which can be defined as a large number of people who visit the same place at the same time, intensifies the negative impacts. In Europe, many historic cities have been suffering since a long time a touristic overcrowding, the so-called overtourism. The most emblematic case is Venice, whose historic centre is so crowded of visitors that is no longer a place to live in, but only a place for tourists. This is a kind of gentrification, called touristification. Starting from a study of the effects of overtourism in historic centres, this research analyse the case study, Malaga, where the overtourism has begun recently, after the renovation of the historic centre.

The objective of this research is to analyse the transformations of the historic centre of the city of Malaga to provide data and indicators that allow assessing this process. The relationship between tourism and gentrification has been studied, two different concepts that generate the specific processes of touristification and overtourism. The research demonstrate that although tourism has benefits for the territories or the cities involved, has also negative impacts, that would be necessary reduces for the residents' well-being.

## 2. EFFECTS OF TOURISTIFICATION AND OVERTOURISM IN HISTORIC CENTRES

In recent decades, many City Council have opted for increasing tourism as a way to face economic decline and intensifying competitiveness in the context of globalization. However, crowds of visitors flock into cities, especially in high season, and in consequence, the negative perception of tourism is increasing among residents. Nevertheless, urban tourism has both positive and negative impacts. Among positive effects its contribution to the local economy in form of employment stands out (Andreck & Nyaupane, 2011; Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Diedrich & García, 2009; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997), in fact it has become the major or even the only current source of local economic development in many cities. Tourism also helps to preserve heritage (Akis Peristianis & Warne, 1996; Korca, 1996; Liu, Sheldon, & Var, 1987; Oviedo, Castellanos, & Martin, 2008;

Yoon, Gursoy, & Chen, 2001), it is the driving force for significant urban renewals and it also contributes to increasing local pride and identity (Besculides, Lee, & McCormick, 2002; Yoon, Gursoy, & Chen, 2001).

Despite positive contributions, a debate has raised in recent years on the negative consequences of mass tourism in certain locations, with residents' demonstrations showing their rejection towards gentrification by tourism. It is early to affirm that a sort of tourism-phobia is born, but some evidence could point to it, like the assault on a Barcelona's tourist bus in summer 2017. Much of the criticism against urban tourism is related to its concentration on a very limited area of the city and their intensive use of services and facilities (Shoval & Raveh, 2004). Seasonality is generally considered as one of its negative effects (Figini & Vici, 2012) because infrastructures become saturated and traffic congestion problems arise during the high season (Lindberg & Johnson, 1997; Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001). In some urban tourism destinations especially in Europe and USA, tourism is related to drug and alcohol abuse (Diedrich & García-Buades, 2009; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996).

In addition, a large number of visitors causes an increase in waste and air and water pollution (Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Lankford, 1994; Liu, Sheldon, & Var, 1987; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Snaith & Haley, 1999). Furthermore, intensive tourism can cause degradation and banalization of the assets that made the destination attractive, thus limiting the appeal of the city (Lapko, 2014; Glasson, 1994). From a social point of view, tourism can cause a regional economic imbalance between the city and its hinterland (Biddulph, 2015), that can lead to migration from rural areas and a severe change of traditional ways of life, these changes can cause a gender imbalance due to the different jobs demanded (Akis, 2011). These imbalances are related to new forms of dependency between cores and peripheries inside countries and worldwide (Britton, 1982; Brohman, 1996; Mbaiwa, 2005). Finally, mass tourism also demands an increasing accommodation which can be solved either by building large hotels or converting dwellings into short-term apartments. Both models are the cause of gentrification and residents' expulsion through rising house prices.

Overtourism is particularly detrimental in historic centres, which host some particular advantages in the urban context. They concentrate monuments, cultural facilities and quality architecture, as well as a significant part of the commercial and accommodation offer. In addition, they are generally well connected by public transport. In Spain, tourism is a very important part of its economy: it reaches 16% of the gross domestic product, an impact much higher than the European average, which is 9.6% (Caixa Bank, 2017). Tourism is a key sector

of the Spanish economy, both for its size, dynamism and ability to influence other areas of economic activity.

The tourist interest in the city centre and especially in its architectural heritage is also related to the trend in global capitalism towards an increasing importance of the economic exploitation of culture (Hamnett & Shoval, 2003; Shaw & Williams, 2004; Urry & Crawshaw, 2002). Stating from that, the mass cultural consumption is linked closely to urban tourism since cities are the places where cultural products are developed. The commodification of culture (Krätke, 2002) has appeared in the context of a shift from mass production to market-based production and individual consumption patterns that respond to a search of distinction. Thus, lifestyles and fashion play a leading role (Bauer, Escher, & Knieper, 2006) and a response to this trend is the continued specialization of historic centres in particular visitor profiles and independent travellers looking for exclusive experiences.

Historic centres have generally a narrow street pattern and tourists concentrate in a few streets connecting main monuments, museums or cultural and shopping attractions. As a result, the inhabitants perceives the overcrowding as the most evident sign of violation of the sociocultural carrying capacity (Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012). The second visible consequence of overtourism in historic centres is the feeling of being in a theme park, the so-called staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1973) and thematic (Paradis, 2004). The streets and squares most popular by tourists match their expectations, with a combination of standardized facilities (Ritzer, 1998; Erkuş-Öztürk, & Terhorst, 2016) that makes many historic centres look similar to each other, and a search for the unique and the quaint that makes the destination apparently singular.

Some cities have tried to mitigate the negative effects of overtourism through urban planning (Barrera-Fernández, 2016). Urban planning and the control over land use are the most useful tools, thus, it is important to understand business location trends and visitors' spatial behaviour. Most tourists look for accommodation with a short walking distance from major attractions in the city (Arbel & Pizam, 1977), leading to a hierarchy in hotels' quality from luxury ones located in the city centre to the cheaper ones located in the suburbs (Egan & Nield, 2000). Having said that, there are different spatial patterns between hotels and short-term tourist apartments. While the first typology is regulated by a need of a minimum plot surface and building regulations, apartments do not require whole buildings and they expand supply wherever houses and apartment buildings already exist (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017). This distribution has got a relevant impact on its surroundings since tourists spend most of their time around their accomation (Shoval, McKercher, Ng, & Birenboim, 2011). As

a result, the demand for tourist services increases in those areas, especially shops and restaurants, at the expense of businesses traditionally oriented towards residents. When urban planning does not include this kind of analysis and it is only focused on short-term profitability, the rapid changes brought to urban areas can lead to a degenerative vicious circle because seasonality and overcrowding are emphasized (García-Ayllón, 2015; Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012), potentially resulting in the local population's negative attitudes towards tourism (Almeida-García, Peláez-Fernández, Balbuena-Vázquez, & Cortés-Macias, 2016). To tackle this, it is necessary to include the local community in tourism-related urban planning policies (Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, & Carter 2007; Liu, Sheldon, & Var, 1987; Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013; Robson & Robson, 1996; Styliadis, Biran, Sit, & Szivas, 2014).

The intensive use of central spaces increase soil prices and forces residents with a low purchasing power to move to the suburbs (Gotham, 2005). Moreover, the heritage in historic centres adds prestige as a sort of distinction from other neighbourhoods (Gražulevičiūtė-Vilenišké, & Urbonas, 2011). In some contexts, not only the renovation of the historic buildings but also their listing has an influence on the property prices. This increase in prices is also related to the economic compensations provided to the owners of listed buildings (Lawrence, 2010; Rypkema, 2002) and to the urban renovation projects delivered by the public administration.

The dramatic increase in the number of tourist apartments is particularly controversial because of the problems caused between residents and short-term visitors, such as noise, antisocial behaviour, and overuse of common facilities including rooftops and swimming pools. In the urban scene, the concentration of apartments leads to a replacement of local shops by restaurants and premises focused on satisfying the needs of people that only spend a few days in the city. Studies on this topic show that the biggest complaints from the residents' point of view are excessive real estate prices and rental fees, shop prices, lack of hygiene, urban decay, a lack of respect, insecurity and noise (Sellarés, Azpelicueta, & Sánchez-Fernández, 2015). Finally, one long-term consequence of this trend is the loss of social diversity and the identity of the place.

### 3. MALAGA'S URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND ITS SUCCESS AS A TOURIST

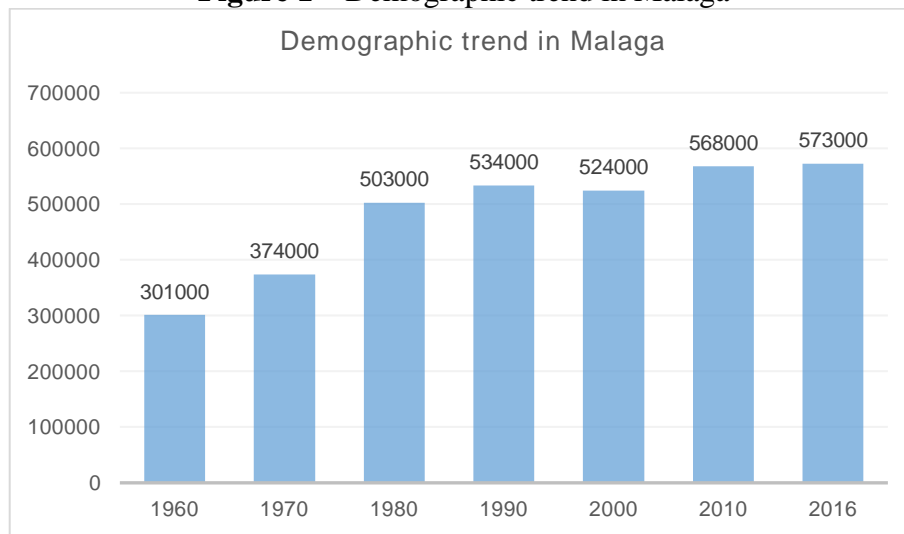
#### DESTINATION

Malaga is located in the southwest of Spain, it is the second most populated city in Andalusia and the sixth in the country. It is considered an important historic city about 2,700 years old, being founded by the Phoenicians as a port city. In the 19th century, Malaga was one of the most industrialized cities in Spain, however, it differs from other industrialized cities of the time, in that it does not have a classic urban expansion. The ownership of large urban areas by the Catholic Church for the construction of convents caused that in the 19th century, a large amount of land previously occupied by convents was allocated towards building residences. Thus, the expansion of the city was built within it, instead of on its surroundings. This explains that a large number of 19th century and early 20th century buildings are located in the historic centre. Despite the fact that the industrialization began to decline during the 20th century, the port and Malaga's commercial activity made the city double its population between 150,000 inhabitants in 1920 (Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industry, 1920) to 300,000 in 1960 (Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industry, 1960).

Starting with the II Economic Stabilization Plan of the Franco Regime (Government of Spain, 1959), Spain opened up to international markets and found in tourism a way to stabilize the foreign trade balance, with the entry of foreign currency that this activity entailed. The coastal territories, which during the period of the Francoist Autarchy had been excluded from economic planning, became a target for investment in communication infrastructures. Thus, the Costa del Sol started a great tourist development and Malaga became an important centre of economic attraction. 1960 is considered as the beginning of the tourist boom in Spain, doubling the number of visitors in respect to the previous year. Malaga's economy drifted to services and the city started to be known as the capital of the Costa del Sol. In this period, an intense and continuous rural exodus took place from the villages inland towards the city, which became the focus of the labour opportunities brought by the tourist boom on the coast. The result of this demographic increase was a poorly planned urbanization and the progressive abandonment of the historic centre.

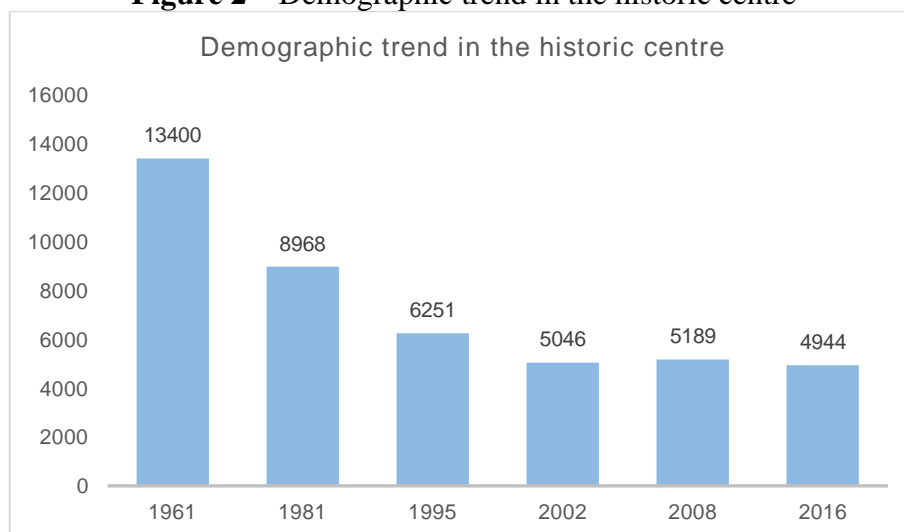
The city of Malaga experienced a dramatic population increase compared to the decline in the city centre from 1960 to 2016. The city gained 200,000 inhabitants while the historic centre lost almost 8,500 residents.

**Figure 1 – Demographic trend in Malaga**



**Source:** Prepared by the authors, based on Malaga City Council, 2016.

**Figure 2 – Demographic trend in the historic centre**



**Source:** Prepared by the authors, based on Malaga City Council, 2016.

Malaga’s city centre, like other European historic centres during those years, was losing its capacity and residential appeal. Residents left due to neglect and obsolescence, looking for new homes in the periphery that were more adapted to their needs, leaving the historic centre as a neighbourhood occupied by ageing and marginal population. Since 1990, with the drafting of the City Centre Special Plan, a process of urban renovation have begun through public investment in dwellings’ rehabilitation and re-qualification of public spaces. Because of these interventions, the city centre became an attractive residential neighbourhood and the central symbolic space of the city.

In 1990, despite the tourism success of the Costa del Sol, only 4% of tourists visited the city, while 15% of tourists visited nearby historic cities such as Granada, Cordoba or

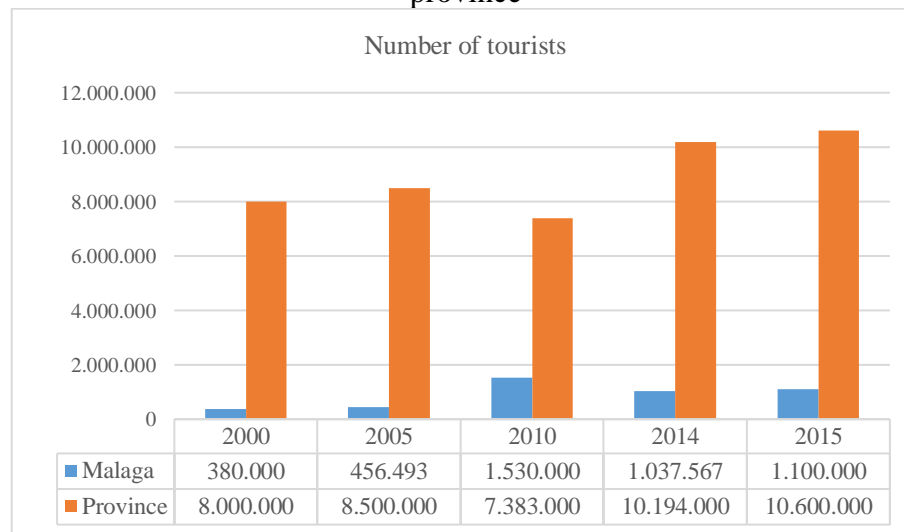


Ronda (Malaga City Council, 2012). However, after the complete regeneration of the historic centre, and the remodelling of the port, the increase in the number of visitors staying in the city of Malaga was dramatic. In the next chapter, the data of this touristic boom. The question to analyse is the way in which this increase in such a little time affects the neighbours of the historic centre and the negative consequences on which it is necessary to act.

#### 4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VISITORS AND RESIDENTS: CONFLICTS AND POSITIVE EFFECTS

After the urban renovation of the historic city centre, Malaga reaches a great touristic success. As it see in the figure below (figure 3), the number of tourists that had visited Malaga redoubled between 2005 and 2015, with a peak of 1.5 million in 2010. The comparison with the visitors to other sun and sand destinations in the province of Malaga proves the city's growth and the maturity as a tourist destination.

**Figure 3** – Comparison between the number of tourists in the city of Malaga and in its province



**Source:** Prepared by the authors, based on Government of Andalusia, 2016.

The main investment in urban renewal was concentrated between the 1990s and 2005. The historic city centre becomes an attractive place for tourism a leisure. The works of the port ended in 2011, and they meant an improvement of port infrastructure and an effective incorporation of more than 14,000 m<sup>2</sup> of public ground destined to activities of recreation, leisure and restaurants (Ferrary, 2011). The port of Malaga became one of the most important ones in the Mediterranean Sea as a cruise destination. In 2011, passengers' number reached the record of 650,000, an increase of more than 35% compared to the previous year (Europa Press, 2011). Recently, the number of cruise passengers that disembarked at Malaga was

450.000 per year (Ferrary, 2015). Therefore, in the last ten years, tourism in Malaga becomes a mass phenomenon. Especially at certain times of the year (in summer, Easter, Christmas time), people who lives in centre suffer of the effect of overtourism. We will analyse this in the next paragraph.

A survey carried out by Instituto de Estudios Sociales Avanzados – Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (IESA-CSIC) in 2006, the majority of Andalusians explains what was the social perception of the tourism before it became a mass tourism (Rodríguez González, 2007). Those who participated in this study were residents of the main mature destinations in the region (Granada, Córdoba, Torremolinos, etc). However, respondents mentioned some negative impacts, although the benefits were considered more important.

Some of the most important benefits brought by tourism were:

- Job creation.
- The stimulus for the construction sector, one of the most important economic activities in Andalusia.
- The economic impact of tourism on businesses, the settlement of young people in the territory and wealth creation.
- Improvement of infrastructures and services: tourism is attributed a certain influence on infrastructure investment, which benefits all residents.
- Expansion and improvement of cultural resources.

Among the negative effects were:

- Deterioration of air quality due to the massive car traffic, the change in the microclimate of streets and squares, and damage to architectural heritage derived from pollution.
- Overcrowding that hinders mobility in public spaces, which makes residents avoid going to the most saturated spaces.
- Loss of historical heritage due to the demand for infrastructures related to tourism, which contributes to demolish or transform historic buildings to host tourism activities, as in the case of Hoyo de Esparteros in Malaga's city centre, where there are pressures to build a new hotel at the expense of a historic building.
- Replacement of traditional economic activities, with the consequent loss of the multifunctionality that characterizes historic cities, favouring the predominance of activities related to tourism (hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops).
- Noise at night in the areas with the highest concentration of visitors.
- Increase in housing prices due to the presence of tourist apartments, which are much more profitable for property owners.

- Museification and touristification of the spaces, with the consequent banalization of the historic city.
- Deterioration of the urban environment.
- Conflicts between visitors and residents.
- Negative effect of the tourist use of public spaces (restaurants terraces, advertising, street exhibitors, etc.).

## 5. TOURISTIFICATION AND GENTRIFICATION IN MALAGA

If the negative consequences of tourism can occur even with a sustainable number of visitors, these intensify in the so-called mass tourism phenomenon. The latter involves a large number of people who arrive at the same time to an urban area that is not able to host them without interfering heavily with the residents' daily life. A representative case is that of cruise ships docking only for a few hours in the city. Tourists occupy massively and for a short time squares, streets, monuments, facilities, shops and restaurants. This kind of tourists consumes urban resources and affects the residential ecosystem of the historic centre of Mediterranean cities with cruise terminals.

Touristification is the condition by which a city or another type of tourist destination such as a beach or a natural park receives a number of visitors that make the residents' quality of life and the quality of the tourist experience deteriorate in an unacceptable manner. It is the opposite situation of responsible tourism, which contributes to improving the quality of the environment and the life of the hosting population. This phenomenon is increasing in recent years in many European destinations. In Venice, Barcelona, Madrid, London, Palma de Mallorca, Florence or Amsterdam there are frequent protests and debates around the need to limit the daily number of visitors in historic centres. The saturation of public spaces and local transport, as well as the unbearable degree of noise and urban waste, has meant that in cities such as Barcelona the level of social protest is so high that media is speaking of tourism-phobia. One of the most well-known and emblematic cases is that of Venice, whose historic centre with narrow streets is crowded every day by thousands of tourist.

In the specific case of Malaga, this problem is of great importance even though the level of social protest of other cities such as Barcelona or Venice has not been reached yet. After the works of urban renewal of the historic centre and the port, the historic centre has ceased to be a residential neighbourhood to become a single-use space primarily aimed at tourism exploitation.

Another process added to the explained one is gentrification. It means an urban, economic and sociological transformation of a given territory by public-private investment after a period of abandonment. It is a typical phenomenon of large cities, and especially of central areas. As a result, the original population is displaced by another of a higher purchasing power, since the investments in rehabilitation and re-qualification have started. The process often begins with the urban regeneration of a rundown neighbourhood, which sometimes includes the historic centre. The greater the difference between the economic value of degraded land and the expectation of reclaimed land, the greater the capacity to attract new residents with high purchasing power. One of the first authors who spoke about the concept of gentrification was the British sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008). According to her, gentrifying means replacing the resident population in a neighbourhood with one of higher socioeconomic status. This phenomenon has been evolving and finding new ways that surpass the classic definition. Some of these forms are:

- Studentification (Smith, 2004): a set of social, economic and environmental changes that cause a massive increase in the student population in some areas of a university-based city.
- Commercial gentrification: along with classical residential gentrification, this involves commercial activities. Traditional trade is replaced by other activities for the elite.
- Tourism gentrification: it refers to the transformation of a neighbourhood into an enclave for tourist and leisure activities. This term was used for the first time by Gotham (2005) referring to the Vieux Carré, the French quarter of New Orleans. In this case, gentrification is both residential and commercial and it is caused by the privileged position of the neighbourhood, which displaces residents and businesses that cannot cope with the rise in prices of real estate and premises.

In Malaga, touristification is not in the social debate as in the cases mentioned above, but the problem already exists. The tourist use of the city means that the historic centre is no longer a livable neighbourhood, on the opposite it has been transformed into a single-use district for tourist use. The areas of the city that suffer the massive arrival of visitors are the port, Malagueta Beach, Plaza de la Merced and its surroundings, Plaza de la Marina, Paseo del Parque and Alameda Principal.

The City Centre Special Plan (Malaga City Council, 1989) includes the historic centre itself and surrounding neighbourhoods. It had to give a specific response to the problems that limited the residential use of the city centre, abandoned during the decades of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

The problems highlighted by the plan were:

- Urban deterioration, rundown heritage buildings, public spaces and houses.
- Lack of infrastructures and facilities.
- Lack of public transportation.
- Lack of parking for residents.
- Lack of cultural offer.
- Difficult coexistence between different activities (youth nightlife, the transformation of residences into commerce, etc.).

The lack of attraction of the historic centre for residents became clear (Malaga City Council, 2011). After investments in urban regeneration and re-qualification, the number of residents in the neighbourhoods included in the plan began to increase, while those in the historic centre continued to decrease.

The historic centre has been transformed into an attractive place for visitors but unliveable for residents, who keep abandoning it and making the coexistence between tourists and residents a growing problem.

The next figure shows a summary of the indicators analysed by the authors that will be explained in the next paragraph. Those indicators put in connection tourism and gentrification: tourism has negative impacts that it is necessary to mitigate for the liveability of the neighborhood involved. Those indicators are the result of a direct study of the district and also of data collected by the authors.

**Figure 4** – Indicators of tourism and gentrification

<b>Tourism indicators</b>	<b>Gentrification indicators</b>
Competitiveness of the destination in relation to other Spanish cities	The population of the historic centre and the area included in the City Centre Special Plan before and after regeneration works
Number of tourists in Malaga and its province during the last 10 years	Prices of house for sale and rent
Number of cruise ships arriving at the city	Number of cultural events in public spaces (2016)
The average expenditure of tourists/cruise ships passengers	Street noise caused by nightlife leisure activities and restaurants
Number of restaurants in the historic centre	Sidewalk occupation by restaurant terraces
The offer of tourist apartments/hotel rooms	Number of restaurants, shops and hotels in the historic centre
	Loss of heritage in the historic centre

**Source:** Prepared by the authors.

## 5.1. Tourism indicators

Competitiveness of the tourist destination: according to Malaga's Tourist Situation Report (Malaga City Council, 2013), Malaga is the fast-growing tourist destination in Spain in the last decade. The city stands out while other destinations such as Valencia or Zaragoza have grown little or are stagnant.

The number of tourists and cruise ships: after the regeneration of the city centre and the port, cruise passengers no longer travel to other nearby destinations such as Córdoba or Granada, but the majority (85%) stay in the capital (Ferrary, 2015).

The touristification phenomenon affects both residents and commercial activities, and as a result, traditional activities and everyday businesses have been forced to move out of the centre. Fieldwork has been carried out for this research during the period of January-March 2017. The results are as follows:

- 475 traditional trade activities;
- 53 global trade shops and restaurants.
- 32 tourist activities.
- 306 hotel and leisure activities.

The number of hospitality and leisure activities is almost equal to that of traditional commerce. The so-called global trade activities are those related to commercial gentrification, displacing traditional commerce occupying the most relevant and visible spaces in the most representative areas of the historic centre.

In the city centre, most of the offers of hotel beds are concentrated in a very limited space. According to an estimate made comparing the most important websites of tourist reservations (Airbnb, Booking, Trivago and other ones), there are about 340 tourist accommodation places between hotels, apartments and rooms (data from January to March 2017). The tourist rent is the most profitable of the market, reason why many property owners have expelled their tenants to renovate the apartments for tourist accommodation. Although this phenomenon does not reach the level of Barcelona (market saturation, social protest), the problem begins to be very visible, thus, the public administration should intervene to regulate and control its effects on the population and the urban ecosystem.

**Figure 5** – Location of commercial activities in the historic centre



Legend:

● Banks ● Global trade ● Traditional trade ● Tourist activities ● Restaurants and leisure

Source: Prepared by the authors.

**Figure 6** – Location of hotels and tourist apartments in the historic centre

Legend:

● Airbnb (205 rooms or flats) ● Booking (114 flats, B&B and rooms) ● Booking (21 hotels)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

It can be observed that accommodation is distributed evenly throughout the historic centre, while shops are located in three specific areas:

- Larios Street, Constitución Square and their surroundings, where global trade prevails.
- Between La Merced Square, Alcazabilla Street, Santa Lucía Street and Comedias Street: restaurants and nightlife activities prevail. Tourist saturation is more evident.
- Between Nueva Street, Compañía Street, Santa Isabel Street and Alameda Principal: local commerce prevails. Here the number of tourists is lower compared to the more crowded areas.

## 5.2. Gentrification indicators

As indicators of the gentrification process, the price of housing has been considered. Therefore, a comparison has been made between the sale and rental prices for neighbourhoods in Malaga. The analysis has been carried out with searches on real estate websites (data are from January-March 2017). The prices in the historic centre are the highest in the market.

The average prices of flats on sale in Malaga City are 1,940 €/m<sup>2</sup>, in the historic city centre they raise until 3,300 €/m<sup>2</sup> (70% plus compared to the average prices of the real estate



market). Rental prices are higher in the Malagueta (the beach district near the port and city centre), but in the historic centre, prices are 16% more expensive than average.

On another hand, there are many cultural and leisure events occupying the public space throughout the year. If cultural events, especially traditional ones, are important for citizens, there is also a negative impact on residents' lives. During public events, the number of visitors increases significantly and the historic centre becomes overcrowded, causing a great inconvenience for the development of daily life.

The authors have carried out a search on Malaga City Council and the Government of Andalusia's websites in order to fill in a calendar of public events in Malaga related to the year 2016. Events took place 114 days (31 days with more than one event) which occupied the most representative public spaces of the city centre and its surroundings – above all Constitución Square, Larios Street, La Marina Square and Paseo del Parque.

One of the main inconveniences suffered by residents of the historic centre is noise. In a study of the City Council of Malaga (2012), noise is the main complaint made by neighbours in this area of the city. As an example, neighbours have shown the following noise types and schedules that they suffer every working day:

- 13h-01h: restaurants and open-air cafés, many of them with music in the street.
- 23h: the opening of nightclubs: interior noise when opening and closing doors, people entering and leaving, and people chatting and drinking in the street.
- 03h: the closing of nightclubs: people shouting and noise of closing metal blinds.
- 04h-06h: garbage collection.
- 08h: delivery of drinks to bars and restaurants.

According to residents' groups that fight against noise,

suffering in your own house a noise that does not let you sleep can be an authentic torture. The World Health Organization says it causes disorders on mental and cardiovascular health, both immediate and long-term, and the European Court has described it as an attack on fundamental rights. But it is not just that, it is also when you get up to go to work the following morning and you find a landscape of drunk people, pieces of broken bottles and dirt (Aunión, 2016, online).

In Spain, 55 decibels are considered as the level of acoustic comfort, although the World Health Organization recommends a maximum of 50 decibels. In addition, noise is more pernicious if it is constant or if it occurs during the hours aimed at sleeping. Therefore, Malaga's Urban Plan (Plan General de Ordenación Urbanística – PGOU) provides a study of noise to determine the Acoustically Saturated Zones in the city (Malaga City Council, 2012).

According to this map, the area with the highest level of noise is the one with pedestrian streets and nightlife. In this area, the main economic activity consists of restaurants

whose open-air seating occupy the public space, and prevent residents' movement. According to the Oficina de Medio Ambiente Urbano (OMAU) study (Malaga City Council, 2012), the pedestrianisation of the public space as a way to give priority to the pedestrian was not achieved. The use of vehicles has been restricted, but they been replaced by restaurants' open-air seating. The lack of regulations in relation to this issue in the City Centre Special Plan is an unsolved problem. The streets with the highest concentration of tables and chairs are Las Flores Square, Uncibay Square, Santa María Street, Moreno Monroy Street, Strachan Street, La Bolsa Street, and Marín Garcia Street.

Another important problem that affects the residents of the historic centre is the loss of their historic heritage, which implies the loss of identity and roots of the inhabitants. The data on the loss of built heritage is important because it implies that all buildings that do not have effective architectural protection are at risk of being demolished to erect new buildings for tourist accommodation, as in the intention to demolish Hoyo de Esparteros explained above. As it has been mentioned, the most lucrative use of a building in the historic centre today is tourism in all its forms.

Between the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the regeneration of the city centre has meant the loss of a significant number of historic buildings. According to the study by the geographer Ozomek (2012), most of the demolitions have taken place between the 1990s and 2010, and they are still going on today. Just walking around the historic centre, it is possible to realize that more than half of the buildings have been renovated without respect for the architectural identity of the historic centre and that the buildings in ruin are at risk of being demolished to be adapted to tourist uses. The City Centre Special Plan regulations are inoperative in this sense, as it does not effectively oblige the owner to reform its building to keep it in good condition.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Urban tourism has a number of positive effects in the city, especially related to job creation and economic diversification, and that is why a growing number of cities are transforming themselves to attract a larger number of visitors. However, overtourism or the arrival of tourists beyond the capacity of the city can cause some negative effects such as crowding in certain streets due to seasonality and massive arrival of visitors, noise, and pollution, among others, which might be the seed of future tensions between residents and visitors or even a certain tourism-phobia.

Overtourism accelerates processes of gentrification that were going on since decades ago and is directly related to touristification. These trends have seen the historic centres as their battlefields in a context of the commodification of culture, where built heritage is perceived as a way of distinction from other neighbourhoods, and finally to increase profit from remodelled dwellings. Tourist apartments have added their part to this form of diffused capitalism and they have made traditional land use regulations in urban plans useless to control this kind of tourist accommodation, thus becoming a major risk in the transformation of traditional residential areas into single-use tourist neighbourhoods.

The study case of Malaga has arisen some particularities that nevertheless might be found in other cities facing the same challenges, especially Mediterranean middle size cities. Firstly, gentrification and touristification are the product of a public-private collaboration, where the public administration plays its role in remodelling the urban scene through dedicated urban plans and investment. Although these interventions have changed deeply the architecture and urban design of the city centre, they have not been effective to revert the loss of residents, in fact, they have helped to replace them by tourists, due to the increasing attraction for investment. Secondly, cruise ships arrivals aggravate mass tourism at particular days during the high season, when thousands of visitors colonise a few streets, shops and restaurants for a few hours. Among the different negative effects caused by overtourism, noise has become the symbol of the neighbours' complaint. Although heritage should be an incentive for gentrification, Malaga has seen how a significant amount of its historic architectural heritage have been lost in many cases to give place to hotels and buildings for tourist apartments. Furthermore, the efforts to pedestrianise a large area of the city centre has turned into an excessive occupation of the streets by restaurants with open-air seating, thus privatising the public space.

All the analyses presented and the learnings taken from the case of Malaga should be included in further regulations, and the voice and needs of residents must be taken into account if the objective is to achieve a better balance between tourist activities and other urban land uses. It is needed to take advantage of the positive impacts brought by tourism in the long term without exhausting the key attraction of the city, the historic centre, and the neighbours that give everyday life to this urban scene.

## REFERENCES

- Akis, A. (2011). The effects of mass tourism: A case study from Manavgat (Antalya–Turkey). *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 19, 289-296.
- Akis, S., Peristianis, N.K., & Warner, J. (1996). Residents' attitudes to tourism development: the case of Cyprus. *Tourism Management*, 17(7), 481-494.
- Almeida-García, F., Peláez-Fernández, M.Á., Balbuena-Vázquez, A., & Cortés-Macias, R. (2016). Residents' perceptions of tourism development in Benalmádena (Spain). *Tourism Management*, 54, 259-274.
- Andereck, K.L. & Nyaupane, G.P. (2011). Exploring the nature of tourism and quality of life perceptions among residents. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(3), 248-260.
- Arbel, A. & Pizam, A. (1977). Some determinants of urban hotel location: The tourists' inclinations, *Journal of Travel Research*, 15(3), 18-22.
- Aunió, J.A. (2016). My city doesn't let me sleep. *El País*, 14.
- Barrera-Fernández, D. (2016). *Attracting visitors to ancient neighbourhoods. Creation and management of the tourist-historic city of Plymouth, UK*. Groningen: InPlanning.
- Bauer, S., Escher, A., & Knieper, S. (2006). Essaouira, The Wind City as a Cultural Product. *Erdkunde*, 60(1), 25-39.
- Belisle, F.J. & Hoy, D.R. (1980). The perceived impact of tourism by residents a case study in Santa Marta, Colombia. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 7(1), 83-101.
- Biddulph, R. (2015). Limits to mass tourism's effects in rural peripheries. *Annals of Tourism Research*, (50), 98-112.
- Britton, S.G. (1982). The political economy of tourism in the Third World. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 9(3), 331-358.
- Brohman, J. (1996). New directions in tourism for third world development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(1), 48-70.
- Brunt, P. & Courtney, P. (1999). Host perceptions of sociocultural impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(3), 493-515.
- Caixa Bank (2017). *Tourism, travelling to the future, monthly report June 2016*. Madrid: Caixa Bank Research. Retrieved from [http://www.caixabank.com/comunicacion/noticia/estudio-caixabankresearch\\_es.html?id=40215](http://www.caixabank.com/comunicacion/noticia/estudio-caixabankresearch_es.html?id=40215)
- Diedrich, A. & García-Buades, E. (2009). Local perceptions of tourism as indicators of destination decline. *Tourism Management*, 30(4), 512-521.
- Dyer, P., Gursoy, D., Sharma, B., & Carter, J. (2007). Structural modeling of resident perceptions of tourism and associated development on the Sunshine Coast, Australia. *Tourism Management*, 28(2), 409-422.
- Egan, D.J. & Nield, K. (2000). Towards a theory of intraurban hotel location. *Urban Studies*, 37(3), 611-621.
- Erkuş-Öztürk, H. & Terhorst, P. (2016). Innovative restaurants in a mass-tourism city: Evidence from Antalya. *Tourism Management*, 54, 477-489.

- Europa Press. (2011). *The cruise tourism gives 56 million and the passengers rise by 35%*. El Mundo, 8 February. Retrieved from: [http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/02/07/andalucia\\_malaga/1297085925.html](http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/02/07/andalucia_malaga/1297085925.html)
- Ferrary, M. (2011). El Muelle Uno integrará el puerto y la ciudad. *La Opinión de Málaga*, 29 November. Retrieved from <http://www.laopiniondemalaga.es/malaga/2011/11/29/muelle-integrara-puerto-ciudad/467080.html>
- Ferrary, M. (2015). Cruise traffic rises again after two years of impasse. *La Opinión de Málaga*, 18 December. Retrieved from <http://www.laopiniondemalaga.es/malaga/2015/12/18/trafico-cruceiros-malaga-crecer/816386.html>
- Figini, P. & Vici, L. (2012). Off-season tourists and the cultural offer of a mass-tourism destination: The case of Rimini. *Tourism Management*, 33(4), 825-839.
- García-Ayllón, S. (2015). La Manga case study: Consequences from short-term urban planning in a tourism mass destiny of the Spanish Mediterranean coast. *Cities*, 43, 141-151.
- Glasson, J. (1994). Oxford: A heritage city under pressure: Visitors, impacts and management responses. *Tourism Management*, 15(2), 137-144.
- Gotham, K.F. (2005). Tourism gentrification: The case of New Orleans' Vieux Carré (French Quarter). *Urban Studies*, 42(7), 1099-1121.
- Government of Andalusia (2016). Analysis and Statistic of tourism in Andalusia. Available at: <http://www.turismoandaluz.com/estadisticas/node/20>
- Government of Spain. (1959). *Stabilization Plan of 1959 or National Economic Stabilization Plan*. Approved by the government by Decree Law, on July 21, 1959 and endorsed by the Cortes on July 28, 1959.
- Gražulevičiūtė–Vilenišké, I., & Urbonas, V. (2011). Architectural Heritage as a Socioeconomic Opportunity for Revitalization of Historic Urban Centres: A Global Perspective. *Architecture and Urban Planning*, (5), 27-37.
- Hamnett, C. & Shoal, N. (2003). Museums as flagships of urban development. *Cities and visitors: Regulating people, markets, and city space*, 219-236.
- Haralambopoulos, N. & Pizam, A. (1996). Perceived impacts of tourism: The case of Samos. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(3), 503-526.
- Korca, P. (1996). Resident attitudes toward tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(3), 695-697.
- Krätke, S. (2002). Network analysis of production clusters: the Potsdam/Babelsberg film industry as an example. *European Planning Studies*, 10(1), 27-54.
- Lankford, S.V. (1994). Attitudes and perceptions toward tourism and rural regional development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 32(3), 35-43.
- Lapko, A. (2014). Urban tourism in Szczecin and its impact on the functioning of the urban transport system. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 151, 207-214.
- Lawrence, C.W. (2010). *New Neighbors In Old Neighborhoods: Explaining the Role of Heritage Conservation in Sociocultural Sustainability and Gentrification*. (Graduation Thesis, University of Pennsylvania ScholarlyCommons, 2010)
- Lees, L., Slater T., & Wyly, E. (2008). *Gentrification*. New York: Routledge.

- Lindberg, K. & Johnson, R.L. (1997). Modeling resident attitudes toward tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(2), 402-424.
- Liu, J.C., Sheldon, P.J., & Var, T. (1987). Resident perception of the environmental impacts of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 14(1), 17-37.
- MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589-603.
- Malaga City Council. (1989). *Special Plan for Protection and Interior Reform of the Historic Centre of Malaga*. Definitively approved on 10/30/1989 Plenary session of the City Council of Málaga and published on 12/15/1989 Official Gazette of the Province.
- Malaga City Council. (2011). Analysis of the population in the range of the city centre.
- Malaga City Council. (2011). *The City Centre Special Plan*. Definitive approval in the Boletín Oficial de la Junta de Andalucía on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.pgou.eu/Malaga.html>
- Malaga City Council. (2013). *Tourism report city of Malaga 2013*.
- Malaga City Council, Oficina de Medio Ambiente Urbano, & Iniciativa Urbana. (2012). *Analysis of mobility, accessibility and ornaments in the area of Malaga city centre*.
- Mbaiwa, J.E. (2005). Enclave tourism and its socio-economic impacts in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. *Tourism management*, 26(2), 157-172.
- McGehee, N.G. & Andereck, K.L. (2004). Factors predicting rural residents' support of tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(2), 131-140.
- Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industry. (1920). *Census of the population of Spain according to the census made in the Peninsula and adjacent islands*. Retrieved December, 31, from <http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/treeNavigation.do?tn=82705>
- Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industry. (1960). *Population and housing census of Spain according to the registration made on December 31, 1960*. Retrieved from <http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/treeNavigation.do?tn=92681>
- Neuts, B. & Nijkamp, P. (2012). Tourist crowding perception and acceptability in cities: An applied modelling study on Bruges. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(4), 2133-2153.
- Oviedo-Garcia, M., Castellanos-Verdugo, M., & Martin-Ruiz, D. (2008). Gaining residents' support for tourism and planning. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 10(2), 95-109.
- Ozomek, A. (2012). *Edificios: paisaje urbano patrimonio BIC Centro Histórico Málaga*. Retrieved from <http://bodrios-arquitectonicos-centro-malaga.blogspot.com.es/2012/04/>
- Paradis, T.W. (2004). Theming, tourism, and fantasy city. *A Companion to Tourism*, 195, 97-112.
- Prayag, G., Hosany, S., & Odeh, K. (2013). The role of tourists' emotional experiences and satisfaction in understanding behavioral intentions. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 2(2), 118-127.
- Ritzer, G. (1998). *The McDonaldization thesis: Explorations and extensions*. London: Sage.
- Robson, J. & Robson, I. (1996). From shareholders to stakeholders: critical issues for tourism marketers. *Tourism Management*, 17(7), 533-540.
- Rodríguez González P. (2007). *The Andalusians and the tourism, the social perception of the tourism*. Seville: Government of Andalusia, Department of Tourism, Trade and Sport.

- Rypkema, D.D. (2002). *Historic preservation and affordable housing: The missed connection*. Washington: National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington.
- Sellarés, M.A., Azpelicueta, M.D.C., & Sánchez-Fernández, M.D. (2015). Turismo sostenible: lugareños frente a turistas. El caso de la ciudad de Barcelona. *Holos*, 3, 331-337.
- Shaw, G. & Williams, A.M. (2004). *Tourism and tourism spaces*. London: Sage.
- Sheldon, P.J. & Abenoja, T. (2001). Resident attitudes in a mature destination: the case of Waikiki. *Tourism Management*, 22(5), 435-443.
- Shoval, N., McKercher, B., Ng, E., Birenboim, A. (2011). Hotel location and tourist activity in cities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1594-1612.
- Shoval, N. & Raveh, A. (2004). Categorization of tourist attractions and the modeling of tourist cities: based on the co-plot method of multivariate analysis. *Tourism Management*, 25(6), 741-750.
- Smith, D.P. (2004). Studentification: the gentrification factory. *Gentrification in a Global Context*, 73.
- Snaith, T. & Haley, A. (1999). Residents' opinions of tourism development in the historic city of York, England. *Tourism Management*, 20(5), 595-603.
- Stylidis, D., Biran, A., Sit, J., & Szivas, E.M. (2014). Residents' support for tourism development: The role of residents' place image and perceived tourism impacts. *Tourism Management*, 45, 260-274.
- Urry, J. & Crawshaw, C. (2002). Tourism and the photographic eye. In C. Rojek, & J. Urry. (Eds.). *Touring Cultures*. London: Routledge, 186-205.
- Yoon, Y., Gursoy, D., & Chen, J.S. (2001). Validating a tourism development theory with structural equation modelling. *Tourism Management*, 22(4), 363-372.
- Zervas, G., Proserpio, D., & Byers, J.W. (2017). The rise of the sharing economy: Estimating the impact of Airbnb on the hotel industry. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(5), 687-705.

---

#### FORMAT FOR QUOTATION OF THIS ARTICLE

BARRERA-FERNÁNDEZ, D., BUJALANCE S. G., & SCALICI, M. (2019). Touristification in historic cities: Reflections on Malaga. *Revista de Turismo Contemporâneo*, 7(1), 93-115.  
<https://doi.org/10.21680/2357-8211.2019v7n1ID16169>

---