

TOURISM, HERITAGE AND HISTORICAL CENTERS. CULTURAL MARKETING STRATEGIES IN MÁLAGA

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Abstract

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Nowadays, the recovery of historical centers has become a key reference to stimulate tourism and the development of this sector as an economic engine and source of wealth. Specifically, for Málaga, this has been a key factor to fuel tourism and economic development which apparently revert in a significant benefit for the municipality. Within the last decade Málaga has achieved to outstand among the most important cultural tourism destinations in the world thanks to a strong political push and the project leaded by the brand "Malaga City Museums". We propose the following communication analysis of the main actions that contribute to the financial recovery of Málaga taking advantage of a factor of great importance as it is tourism, given that we talk about the capital city of the Costa del Sol, and most importantly, its direct and potential impact on the economic activity.

Keywords

Tourism, cultural heritage, historical centers, Málaga, Cultural Marketing, Museums.

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Introduction

Mass tourism in historical centers is not a recent issue at all, however, the intensity of tourists who visit historic cities and their monuments on a daily basis does become a matter of enormous interest for conservation and heritage management. The host capacity overflow affecting heritage destinations causes an irreparable damage to those cultural resources when turned into the base of the current tourist activity (Troitiño, 2016). As a result, the profusion of documents and research carried out over the past decades has resulted, among other things, in a change in the tourism model and in the management of its resources. A model designed in such a way that in the historical centers the problems of any urban agglomeration are concentrated, but at the same time they are elevated to a category in which it is easy to detect conflicts and tensions as a consequence of the concentration of tertiary activities in some areas, versus its nonexistence in other areas, combined with the aging of the population and depletion of an extremely fragile cultural heritage.

A new situation that places cities facing new uses and their recognition as an urban space that is transformed to meet cultural and touristic objectives, being these at the same associated time with the values of the historical city. However, there is a thin and delicate line separating tourist enjoyment -and therefore the positive effects received from such activity- of certain dark and negative issues associated with a phenomenon such as the heritage tourism. In the recent times' panorama, the historical city of Málaga has become a clear example to turn to as a case of study for the understanding of a phenomenon that starts with the creation and invention of a cultural destination with its own brand, and is now starting to reap the rewards.

Heritage and Urban Landscape

*Carta de Quito de 1967*¹, Historical landscape in cities became for the first time a matter of attention in the 1964 Venice Charter, while the 1967 Quito Charter would expose the need to reconcile the demands of urban progress with the safeguarding of environmental values. According to the European Landscape Convention 2000 signed by Spain in 2007, "Landscape" means any part of the territory as perceived by the population, and which character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors. At the same time, measures of "protection, management and landscape management" have to be treated differently. On the other hand, the Vienna Memorandum of 2005 extends the patrimonial framework to the "urban landscape", understood beyond the traditional "historical center", "set" or "surroundings" and also, in relation to the historical nature of the city, demands to the new architecture a commitment for "complementarity".

With all that (guidelines of the Vienna Memorandum, the Zacatecas Charter and other recent international documents), the Urban Historical Landscape surpasses the idea of the building itself, in order to consider the place, the profile of the city, the visual axes, the lines and types of buildings, open spaces, topography, vegetation and all infrastructures (Rivera, 2013). The heritage of our cities and in particular that of the historical centers cannot, in this way, be restricted to the mere achievement of several elements selected in isolation and exalted capriciously as a bulwark, since all of them obey a historical and cultural logic that defines in a much more complex, more plural and at the same time fragile manner, the value of such certain Cultural Heritage which identity burden is what really makes it unique.

Historical city as a destination

We cannot properly speak about tourism as an activity and social phenomenon until the end of the Old Regime, since one of the most important characteristics that we will associate with the tourist

¹ Conservación y Utilización de Monumentos y Lugares de Interés Histórico y Artístico. 1967. Quito, 1967.

displacements is the question of leisure and the consideration of the time for enjoyment (Royo, 2013). In this way, the Grand Tour is considered to be the first antecedent of current tourist trips (Grande, 2001, Moreno, 2007, Valls, 2003) and the first half of the 20th century when the first tour operators make appearance. During that period, the towns and their monuments became the preferred destinations, with a foreground intention of cultural knowledge that little by little would give way to the first resorts and sun and beach destinations. It is the second half of the 20th century when the increasingly incipient sun and beach tourism will lead to a loss of protagonism of cities as a destination. The coast and its by then considered benefits would eclipse any other attraction for the modern tourist, with the arrival of an economic recovery and national period growth that in the Spanish case would reach the eighties.

From that moment until now, monumental cities have been acquiring more and more protagonism, to the point of being the destination par excellence for the tourism chain worldwide. Driven by tourism, the monumental cities' heritage transcends its cultural dimension, as a historical legacy and collective memory, and becomes a productive resource itself (Calle and García, 1998). A resource to which many cities direct their programs and investments in an increasing effort to make their assets more profitable, thus becoming the main protagonist and generating itself other additional touristic and economic resources. Under this situation, and following the introduction of tourism, the heritage of cities, carrying dimensions or functions of diverse nature (cultural, social, symbolic...) acquires a great value as a product. Such circumstance is evident since the 2009 Charter of Brussels, in which the economic consideration of culture has led to an assessment of the city as a good and as a further factor of territorial development (Morate, 2013). Resuming the story line, the heritage of our cities is not only important because of its inherent historical value and because being a support for the identity of the people, but also for being a resource for development.

Mass tourism and historical centers. New strategies for cultural marketing

The considerable volume of contributions to the scientific literature on this subject (Catro, 2005; Toselli, 2006; De Esteban, 2008; Velasco, 2009; Martos, 2016) focus the attention on the positive and negative aspects of the use and abuse of cultural heritage in historical cities. In fact, the tourist city is concentrated in a very small part of the historical city and factors of diverse nature: historical, promotional, symbolic, urban, etc. influence its configuration (Calle, 2002). Although there is progress in the valorisation and interpretation of cultural heritage as a tourist resource, there are also serious difficulties to adapt historical centers to the tourist function, since undoubtedly the tourist city is a part of the historical city not always well managed, but with close connections with the great landmarks of cultural reference. Such is the case that one of the greatest opportunities offered to historical centers by tourism is the recovery and enhancement of a previously devaluated urban heritage.

New situations in front of which we must seek for a certain balance in order to avoid the conflicts that often arise between tourism and heritage conservation, in this case affecting the historical city centers. Their maintenance constitutes a challenge for their survival as a social reality, although we detect how such issues are not easy to mitigate as long as the integrated policies of recovery, beyond the architectural dimensions, do not face a number of functional and social aspects deeply enough in order to avoid turning historical centers into mere urban sceneries or large open, outdoor museums.

This re-discovery of historical centers and its relationship with cultural tourism has resulted in a new emphasis on the regeneration and rehabilitation policies as well as the searching for specific finance sources in parallel to a patrimonial recovery that in an evident way reinforces the image and the identity of a destination, trying to establish a differential value through a patrimonial mark. Of particular importance in this context are the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), which

over two decades have provided economic resources to especially weak European regions, notably Andalusia and, more specifically, the historical centers of the Andalusian cities.

It is at this point that we address the appearance of the cultural marketing strategy already mentioned (Richards, 2006), applied directly for the benefit of the tourism industry so that urban heritage, culture and image come together to offer a complete product, attractive and unequivocally focused towards the dissemination of a very specific interpretation of the patrimonial reality of the historical centers considered. It is then when the cultural sector is forced to renew its old management practices, searching for an integration of professionalization with entrepreneurial orientation, and at the same time directing efforts to avoid the loss of its own identity due to a renewed patrimonial discourse, which seeks and prioritizes economic objectives and therefore the return of public and private investment.

Marketing applied to culture or cultural marketing is then presented as a necessary and essential business management tool for the design of new promotion, marketing, dissemination and communication strategies and policies. In this new scenario, the tourist appears as a great consumer of cultural goods and services and his presence dynamizes the various activity sectors that generate wealth and employment while introducing new modalities in the consumption and use of cities, developing branches such as hotel business, catering, transport, commerce, leisure or recreation services as well as other second order sectors of activity oriented to the tourist.

“Málaga ciudad de Museos”. Málaga`s positioning in cultural tourism at an international scale

The work of the I PEM² (*Plan Estratégico de Málaga*) starts in 1992 with a trend scenario in which Málaga is not recognized as the capital of the Costa del Sol and for instance, congresses are held in bordering municipalities due to lack of adequate facilities. The main objectives of this strategic project were centered in the development of the coast, the restoration of the historical and monumental legacy of the city along with the development of new tourism segments (congress, cultural, sports, etc ...) capable of improving the attractiveness of Málaga to target international markets. The idea is to build a program capable of turning Málaga into an "European tourism, cultural and leisure capital". In order to join efforts in this direction, the Delegation of Tourism in the City of Málaga was created as a new specific municipal government area. As it appears in the *Evaluation Document of the I Strategic Plan of Málaga*, following the execution of this I Strategic Plan "Málaga improves its competitive position in the regional and national market, but still needs a solid city image that will reaffirm it with advantage in the European and international markets. It needs to improve both the tourism and cultural conditions as well as the coordination of its offer"³. In this same line of work the *Plan of Tourism Development of the City of Malaga* would make appearance in 1996, meaning a clear bet for the development of the cultural tourism in the city. In 2002, the II Strategic Plan of Málaga⁴ was truly initiated and implemented until 2004. During these years, some reports accompanied the implementation of the process and part of the expected conclusions, needs detected and work reports were published⁵.

Among these, we consider worth mentioning a specific report published as preliminary material prior to the elaboration of the II Strategic Plan, report in which some of the strategic keys related to

² Strategic Plan of Málaga (1993- 1996). Málaga on the Costa del Sol.

³ I Strategic Plan of Málaga: <http://www.ciedes.es/> [Last query 20/03/2017]

⁴ II Strategic Plan of Málaga (2000- 2004). Málaga “metrópoli abierta”.

⁵ Among the most outstanding reports we can count *Evaluación del II Plan Estratégico de Málaga; Transformando Málaga. 1994-201; Nuevos Rumbos. Reflexiones del II PEM para el 2020; Málaga, Metrópoli Abierta". II Plan Estratégico de Málaga; Málaga Metrópoli Abierta - Avance de Proyectos Estrella del II Plan Estratégico de Málaga o La Aventura de diseñar el propio destino. Plan Estratégico de Málaga*, All edited by the CIEDES Foundation and consulted in <http://www.ciedes.es/> [Last query 20/03/2017]

tourism and culture are discovered. Thus, in the “Analysis of the evolution of the city”, some of the most important "Challenges of Economy" are concentrated in which culture appears already to be the main motor of the long awaited and persecuted development.

The positioning of Málaga on an international scale as a cultural tourism destination stands out among some of the main objectives set, while it is also mentioned the consolidation of the revitalization process of the Historical Center of Málaga and the recovery of the city as the capital of the Costa del Sol. In summary, the II Strategic Plan of Málaga proposes 4 strategic lines and 10 star projects: "A metropolis that looks to the sea", "The Málaga of Picasso, cultural and attractive", "A metropolis in the vanguard of the knowledge society" and “A renewed city for its citizens and visitors ". These strategic lines are arranged according to 4 visions of Málaga with its consequent projects: "Málaga city littoral", "Málaga city of culture", "Málaga city of knowledge" and "Málaga urban revitalization" (Royo, 2015).

Within the binomial that merges Málaga with its culture as elements capable of boosting the economy and becoming a real motor for development, widening its spectrum to convert tourism as the main factor, it is striking the enormous political effort made during these years as well as the interest to carry out the specific strategic line "The Málaga of Picasso, cultural and attractive". Among the most important star projects to be highlighted is also the *Mediterranean Agora: The city as a cultural space*, in reference to the design and recovery of public spaces part of a process of revitalization of the Historical Center where Málaga's history and culture are defended as a source of wealth and employment. However, it has to be mentioned that the result of all the above has led to a cultural invention that is officially born under the definition of “*Megamuseum*” and the brand “*Málaga City of Museums. Where art lives in*”, representing the pinnacle reflection of a very much defined model that fits as a cultural and artistic commitment but remains disconnected from the historical value of the Málaga's heritage itself.

With a range of 36 museums and exhibition centers, the cultural offer present in the city shines at the moment as the most competitive at national level. In fact, Málaga is the fourth destination of Spain in number of visits received -more than 850,000 during 2016. The capital registers 81,4 visits to museums for every one hundred overnight stays, well ahead of destinations such as Valencia, Madrid, Barcelona or Seville. Málaga hosts cultural centers such as the Center Pompidou, the Center for Contemporary Art CAC Málaga, the Museum of Málaga In the Customs Palace, the Picasso Museum, the Russian Museum Collection or the Automobile and Fashion Museum, all of which are iconized as part of the cultural skyline that draws Málaga's identity. A city that sells culture and proclaims itself as a cultural reference.



Figure 1. Portal of Tourism Málaga. City of Museums and Brand of strategic diffusion. 2017.

The conflicts resulting from the process of "tourisation" in the historical center of Malaga

From a theoretical point of view, we know that the historical centers are characterized by being intensively lived by their citizens and present a multifunctional character, given the great diversity of activities coexisting in them, as well as the social heterogeneity resulting from the continuous over time transformations of the city itself and the associated cultural values (Troitiño, 1995). Qualities that -in relation to our case study, are disappearing due to the strong tourism process in which its historical center is immersed and which effects have affected the local economy, the

environment, the urban landscape and, above all, its daily life. These impacts caused by tourism are closely linked, on one hand, to the volume of visitors influx resulting from the growth of mass tourism (Royo, 2016) and on the other hand to the management of these activities.

The fundamental characteristic that is warning us of a problem or crisis of coexistence with the tourism activity is the disappearance of the residential life, the progressive abandonment of the dwellings in the surroundings, since the pressure of the tourism once exceeded certain limits can incite, in the case of the historical centers, the resident population to abandon them, provoking processes of de-population, ruptures of social balance and patrimonial detachment (Troitiño Vinuesa and Troitiño Torralba, 2010). A fact motivated by the continuous change of use of most of the buildings that are rehabilitated to hotel use, the lack of primary supplies shops in the area and the accessibility difficulties and consequences of the high tourist flow on public transit. The heterogeneous social structure is being deteriorated progressively, decreasing the neighborhood population in favor of the visitor-spectator and temporary consumer. In this way, the life of the neighborhood is supplanted by "theatrical scenarios" designed for the tourist-consumer with whom the citizen of Málaga is not identified. A process inevitably accompanied by a loss of quality, not only in the daily life of the resident, but for the tourist himself who cannot even enjoy the experience, since the physical structure of the street does not have enough capacity to host the high number of pedestrians, cars, buses, bicycles and segways that have to share this limited space in some sections of the historical center of Málaga.

All these conditions have led to the proliferation of a certain "junk tourism" generated by short-term management and an imbalance between Authorities who continue to prioritize the tourism exploitation of this environment instead of promoting its cultural possibilities. This would enhance the recovery of heritage and its collective use, since the reinforcement of the cultural dimension of

the historical center constitutes the base for the formulation of recovery politics, meaning a search for new balance between physical, social and functional realities (Troitiño, 2003).

Conclusions

Málaga is a recognized tourism destination, although its attractiveness was diluted in the last decades of the 20th century due to the increasing strength of the Costa del Sol. As a consequence, strategic planning started in the 90s would solve a large part of the detected deficiencies, in an effort to recover not only international centrality but, at a second level, the city's position as a reference for urban cultural tourism. This means that strategic planning brings to urbanism and tourism new perspectives that allow, in addition, to transfer the current designs of global urban politics to the local scale. From the point of view of urban planning, the city must be able to propose for its historical centers strategies for a complementary integration of the tourism dimension, since multi-functionality is one of the characteristics that identify the historical centers. Our historical centers have to achieve the functional re-use of their rich and diversified cultural heritage (Troitiño, 2003), taking care of the singularity of each historical center and its own internal dynamics in an individual way and at the moment of formulating and managing any policies of protection and recovery.

In order to implement or manage tourism promotion strategies in the historical center, it is necessary to establish an integrated strategy that takes into account the positive and negative effects of the actions planned in the long term, being this a fundamental step to guarantee future success. Thus, as achievements of the strategic planning and cultural marketing mechanisms studied (and currently under review after 20 years of work in the historical center of Málaga), the following results are disaggregate below:

- Existence of a city model created with which to compete in the tourist markets internationally.

- Growth of Málaga as a tourism destination has been possible thanks to the design and execution of strategic planning aimed at building a discourse in which cultural heritage and tourism go hand in hand as an economic resource.
- The restoration of the historical center is a great void in the cultural policy, which has focused exclusively on the creation of new cultural spaces (among which deserve a special mention the Picasso Museum, the Center of Contemporary Art or the Center Pompidou) . Although these confer to Málaga a great cultural and tourism capacity of attraction that differentiates it from the rest of cities, they also contribute to the loss of Málaga`s own identity and history.
- The increase in tourism and the efforts to maintain this sector in the same scenario or historical center of Málaga entails not only great advantages for socio-economic development but also serious risks that jeopardize its authenticity.
- We believe that it would be necessary to establish previous reserves in which historical and heritage criteria are used to determined which spaces of the historical city are susceptible of being converted or adapted for the tourism routes and which not, reinforcing the leading role of Málaga as a reference city of urban cultural tourism.

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