

**GROWTH MACHINES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN MATURE TOURIST  
DESTINATIONS  
COSTA DEL SOL METROPOLITAN AREA (MALAGA) <sup>1</sup>**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to analyse the new processes of tourism growth and its conflicts from the perspective of social movements. First, the urban growth machine analysis model is applied by the systematisation of six projects. Second, the resistance movements against those projects and whether this resistance could be the start of local tourism degrowth policies are examined. The methodology is qualitative, based on documentary analysis, participatory observation, discussion groups and interviews. The case study is the destination of Costa del Sol-Málaga.

The results enable the development of the urban growth machine model in tourist destinations. Meanwhile, social movements demystify the argument based on neoclassical economic progress. , The social movements condemn the effects of large-scale top-down projects, and

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implement alternative bottom-up proposals. Although the social movements do not reject tourism, they call for greater control over its impact, denounce unlimited growth, overtourism and the loss of urban quality of life. These movements advocate a lifestyle linked to the everyday space, which they believe is threatened by excessive urban-tourism growth. They are a symptom of the need to devise a proposal using the principles of degrowth.

**Keywords:** mature coastal tourist destinations, urban growth machine, social movements, Costa del Sol, degrowth.

## INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism activities worldwide is linked to the logic of capitalist expansion and urban agglomerations (Hall, 2009; Fletcher, 2011, Büscher & Fletcher, 2017; Murray & Blázquez, 2009). In order to understand the unlimited growth of many coastal destinations, it is necessary to analyse other global phenomena in the contemporary world (Borja & Castells, 2004; Harvey, 2013): a reduction in the temporal space of communication, the extension of urban life, and demographic and economic concentration. These three factors have had a particular impact on coastal areas, known as coastalisation, where there has been a progressive concentration of people, infrastructures and economic and financial activities (Pié Ninot and Rosa Jiménez, 2014; Romero et al. 2015). These aspects constantly feed the *urban growth machines* (Logan and Molotch, 1987) and explain the dynamic of the evolution of coastal destinations, such as those on the Spanish Mediterranean (Romero et al. 2017). With this growth dynamic in destinations, the potential of “degrowth” has been an unpopular alternative for challenging the expansion of mass tourism because it questions the bases of the capitalist economic system, its myths and the imperative for growth. However, there are multiple symptoms of saturation in some tourist destinations, and limits on growth are being proposed (Saarinen, 2006). At present, doubts are beginning to arise about the virtues of tourist growth and social movements are being organised that oppose projects to enable the growth of destinations. These resistance groups are part of the new social movements and they encourage projects that work from the bottom up, viewing participation as crucial to growth management. The Spanish case is an example of the contradictions that exist between the dominant mentality of growth and the need to apply sustainability measures to more mature and saturated destinations (Pié and Rosa, 2014). The reclassification plans that were launched subject to Spanish and European funding programs (e.g. *Qualifica Costa del Sol*) have in practice resulted in more construction projects (new builds or restoration) and in growth targets (more tourists and more competitiveness) (Navarro-Jurado, 2014).

The study has a twofold objective; first, to put forward an analysis model for urban growth machines in tourist destinations, categorising their characteristics; this aspect highlights the social agreement that aims to justify all of the projects relating to tourism and its new phase of growth. Second, to analyse the resistance movements against those projects and whether this resistance could be the start of local tourism degrowth policies.

The study area is one of the most important mature coastal tourist destinations in the Mediterranean, the Costa del Sol, with a tourism model based on the classic “sun and sea” style holidays of the late 1950s. However, since the 1980s its growth has gone beyond this, making it a modern, cosmopolitan, innovative and creative territory, but also an unlimited urban growth machine (Riechmann, 2001); a territory subjected to huge anthropic pressure with high-impact socio-ecological transformations, and high levels of political and business corruption (Díez Ripolles and Gómez-Cespedes, 2009).

The study begins by defining a theoretical-conceptual basis around the theory of urban growth machines and the approach of new local social movements. Subsequently, the methodology used is detailed and the results in the case study on the Costa del Sol are presented. The study ends with a discussion linking the results and the theoretical framework, outlining the future lines of work.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Tourist destinations as urban growth machines in the current crisis**

Mature coastal tourist destinations have acquired a special role in the accumulation of capital in eras of great global liquidity, because their property crises are one of the triggers of the great global crises (Harvey, 2013). This role was first established in Florida and the Southwest Coast of the United States before the crisis of 1929, and continued in the recent global crisis of 2007 in Florida itself and the Southwest Coast and spread to other tourist spaces, such as the Spanish Mediterranean (Harvey, 2013; Romero et. al., 2015). The restructuring of many destinations has also been carried out via policies that encourage a new growth phase based on more tourists and increased construction of accommodation, facilities and infrastructure. In general, this growth has been based on large processes of urban land expansion carried out via megaprojects (Harvey, 2013) and urban regeneration (Soja 2008), and both have a negative impact on the environmental crisis, the crisis of social inequality and the political crisis of a lack of democracy (Riechmann, 2001; Naredo, 2010). These growth processes are analysed within the framework of the theory of *urban growth machines* (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Cain, 2014; Lang and Rothenberg, 2016).

The urban growth machine (UGM) is a “class alliance” or agreement between the economic and political stakeholders in a specific territory devised through shared interests with the aim of developing a space. The UGM bases economic activity on investment in urban land (renovation or new buildings), the creation of expectations regarding property construction, and the demographic expansion of the population (López and Rodríguez, 2010; Kimelberg, 2011). There are four key stakeholders in this agreement (Logan and Molotch, 1987; López and Rodríguez, 2010): politicians, business people, developers and bankers; technicians and professionals, and a wide range of media. Consequently, the growth of tourist destinations is linked to the evolution of the construction sector, altering the development, planning and management of its classical variables of offer and demand (Fletcher, 2016).

This thesis, situated within a broader theory on the commodification of space, has been criticised for reflecting a situation that is particular to the United States (Rodgers, S. 2009). However, it offers an ideal analytical framework for studying the policies of urban-tourism expansion (that is geographically and sociologically rooted), contextualised in a peripheral region of late capitalism - the southern Mediterranean. It is important to bear in mind that the class alliances of the 21st century are subtler and more discreet than in the North American cities of the 1970s (Boyle, 1999).

Three dimensions have been put forward in order to analyse the UGMs: ideas, rules and projects (Romero, et al, 2017), that coincide with the proposal of Lefebvre on understanding the space of power or perceived space), the space of knowledge (representation of space or conceived space) and daily space (space as practised or lived space) (Lefebvre, 2013; Soja, 2008). These three dimensions range from the intangible nature of ideas, to the tangible nature of the lived territory, and from global territorial scales to their materialisation in building and urban regeneration projects. The dimensions are:

- (1) The overall dimension of ideas issued by international bodies (IMF, WB, WTO, UNWTO, etc.). In the case of tourist destinations, projects are justified as a service towards tourism, which enjoys a positive image in the collective imagination as an economic driving force.
- (2) The dimension of regulations encompasses programmes, plans and laws. Infrastructure plans may be linked on a national and regional level with the strategies of specific megaprojects.
- (3) Projects make these dimensions tangible at a local level, i.e. capital is transformed into development-renovation. On this level, value is placed on the development of more land and it is decided which part of the city is to be regenerated in order to speculate, contributing to forming part of the secondary circuit of the accumulation of fixed capital (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Rodríguez and López, 2010).

In summary, the *theory of urban growth machines* provides an analysis framework for understanding the growth dynamic of Spanish coastal tourism destinations and the continuity of discourses of growth, even during times of crisis (Romero, et al. 2015; Murray et.al, 2017), as well as concerns over their saturation from the approaches of carrying capacity and sustainability (Navarro, et al, 2012). Using this theory, it is possible to show how the growth of destinations is not linked to the classic variables of tourism, and nor does it reflect a sustainable development plan or take into account the environmental and social impact. Within this ideological context based on development, civil society accepts the idea that it is necessary to grow in order to attain wealth and wellbeing, and sociocultural and environmental externalities can be accepted because they will be subsequently resolved. This is compounded by a widespread distrust of alternative development models. In the face of this growth, local resistance groups opposing specific projects emerge.

### **Local resistance to projects: new local social movements in tourist destinations**

The population that is affected and aware of the impact of tourist growth, and mobilises and organises actions to defend and protect its habitable space. The sociological approach of new social movements and their recent evolution (Touraine, 2006), shows that unlike the countermovements of previous decades, current resistance movements present different changes, which are essential to understanding their vision of growth: a social change, a change from formal and hierarchical organisations towards informal and autonomous movements (Castañeda, 2012; Flesher, 2015); a cultural change, moving from dominant ideological thinking and general grievances, towards plurality, integration and specific grievances (Ingrassia, 2013; Soja, 2008; Fuster Morell, 2012); and lastly, a spatial change, from global grievances to local grievances, putting the focus of concern on the spaces that have a more direct impact on daily life (Lefebvre, 2013; Soja 2008). For this reason, many movements have to define themselves as a means of “defence”, “protecting and looking after their own habitat”, because they are aware of their circumstances. They are the result of living in the risk society (Beck, 2000) with a tendency towards dispersion (Ingrassia, 2013) and of living in a liquid society (Bauman, 2013). These movements call for the right to the city and spatial justice (Soja, 2008).

There are studies that have analysed the social movements from different perspectives applied to tourist destinations, although they are still limited (Kousis, 2000). One example is the analysis of the impact that the protests of social movements have on the image of a tourist destination, especially when they are violent protests (Monterrubio, 2017). Social movements are also analysed as facilitators of positive change in destinations, such as the case of crafts (McGehee et.al, 2014). Of greater interest are the studies focused on the analysis of networks and stakeholders and their perception on the carrying capacity (Navarro-Jurado et.al, 2013), as

well as studies of conflicts and local resistance to projects with a major environmental impact (Kousis, 2000), or more recently the studies on “tourism-phobia” (Huete and Mantecón, 2018).

At present, there are social movements that express discontent with tourism growth because it affects their daily life (Fernandez and Pardo, 2017), and the idea of *tourism-phobia* has been disseminated (Murray, 2014; Huete and Mantecón, 2018) in the media (e.g. BBC, 2017; El País, 2018; RTVE, 2017). Among other factors, it is necessary to consider the progressive processes of gentrification and touristization, with different levels of intensity, in Barcelona, Venice, Dubrovnik... (Vives-Miro and Rullán, 2017). Social reactions to touristification have gone from being a local concern of destination management to being a global concern. The overtourism report published by the WTO et.al. (2018) analyses this problem and proposes recommendations that range from traditional strategies of seasonal adjustment (time), alleviation of congestion (space) or the use of technologies, to strategies that place an emphasis on the participation of all the stakeholders in the destination. In the case of coastal destinations such as the Spanish Mediterranean, some of these measures have begun to be implemented through different reclassification plans which also committed to improving tourism sustainability. However, in practice, reclassification strategies have focused on growth, on new builds or renovation in order to improve infrastructures or public spaces of tourism interest. Meanwhile, strategies focused on environmental or social sustainability, which have taken the form of containment actions (for example, in the range of accommodation) and management actions (tourist taxes) have been few in number and controversial for tourism entrepreneurs (Pié and Rosa, 2014).

Academic debate has also seen an increase in analysis and reflections on the exhaustion of the dominant global tourism model based on growth, to the extent that concepts like tourism degrowth are being considered (Bourdeau and Berthelot, 2008; Hall, 2009; Andreoni and Galmarini, 2014). As Hall (2009) summarises, general degrowth involves a paradigm shift based on a social change where the predominant values would among others be quality of life instead of the quantity of consumption (non-materialistic), satisfying basic human needs, fairness, a participatory democracy, respect for human rights, a sense of community and coexistence, the reduction of the dependence on economic activity and an increase in free time. However, in tourism it is still a concept that has barely been studied, with the exception of other concepts that may be very closely related, such as carrying capacity.

In short, the theory of urban growth machines and the study of new social movements place stakeholders at the centre of the analysis. Bearing in mind the developments in tourism studies over the last 15-20 years that Russo analyses (2016), there is a trend for authors to focus on finding out what happens around tourism within a context of daily life, i.e. integrated into sociocultural, economic and political processes. It also aims to find out the subjectivities of the stakeholders involved in tourism, their relationships, the technologies they use and how tourism takes place in the everyday sphere.

The diversity of the stakeholders and their relationships in a destination is complex (Bramwell & Sharman, 2009) and their knowledge is crucial in order to establish a proper basis for planning and strategic management in a tourist destination. The creation of a shared vision (consensus) is the basis of collaborative planning processes (Huxham, 2003, Jamal & Getz, 1995). Furthermore, the existence of a shared vision is crucial for the coordination of resources, conflict management and future strategic planning (Bramwell & Sharman, 2009). However, its application in the context of tourism is relatively recent (Casanuevas et al, 2016) despite the fact that the governance of tourist destinations appears to be the main means of working in the

face of social malaise (Milano, 2018).

## METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDY

In line with the proposed objectives, this study has two parts. On one hand, the direct consequences of urban growth machines have been studied through the comparison and systematisation of six projects. On the other hand, the resistance caused by these projects has been analysed.

The methodology of the study is essentially qualitative, based on documentary analysis, participant observation, discussion groups and interviews. Qualitative methods are acquiring an increasing importance in tourism studies, as they are considered essential for finding out about tourist spaces and their stakeholders (Beard, Scarles & Tribe, 2016).

On the other hand, the results shown here constitute a part of the process and have followed the philosophy of autonomous or action research (Balcazar, 2003). Social stakeholders were invited to participate in the research process in order to transform their social reality. This approach made it possible to approach conflicts from the perspective of the stakeholders and external researchers. A dialogue was conducted with the members of the resistance movements, with participation as observer researchers in the actions organised by these movements. The discussion groups were important for conveying individual thoughts at a group level, and creating a dynamic of conflict analysis and common challenges. These results helped to reinforce the strengths of the participating stakeholders and to develop a sense of belonging to the research process. Via this method, social movements transform the research, and at the same time, they obtain a return because they are able to find out which practices are most effective, and take advantage of the experiences of other movements.

Table 1 shows the methodological tools used to check the theory in the case of the study on the Costa del Sol.

**Table 1: Methodological tools**

Tools	Areas of work
Participant observation and documentary analysis (January 2017 - July 2018) Applied to: UGM projects and resistance movement analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of case studies -large UGM projects- in the Costa del Sol Metropolitan Area</li> <li>• Creation of the UGM model for its adaptation to the case studies.</li> <li>• Review of documentary sources for the analysis of the UGM dynamic, according to the model created, applied to the selected projects</li> <li>• Identification of developer stakeholders and resistance groups and establishing contact</li> <li>• Review of social networks (Twitter), articles, statements and other documents published by the resistance movements.</li> <li>• Creation of data sheets for UGM projects, reasons for conflict and resistance.</li> </ul>
Discussion group 1 (30 November 2017) Applied to: resistance movement analysis 8 participants: 6 men and 2 women	<p>Areas covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics of the resistance movement</li> <li>• Stakeholders: those that they support, those that they oppose, those that are missing and those that they would like to involve</li> <li>• Success stories and areas of improvement</li> </ul>
Discussion group 2 (21 February 2018) Applied to: resistance	<p>Areas covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting on results of 1st Discussion Group.</li> <li>• Validation of data sheets for each project that they oppose</li> </ul>

<p>movement analysis 7 participants: 5 men and 2 women 6: with university education 5: between 50-60 years of age 2: between 35-45 years of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship between the intervention that each movement opposes to the development of tourism and the tourist destination.</li> <li>• Relationship between the intervention and the economy and demographic and urban growth. Perception of the concept of degrowth in relation to what each movement calls for.</li> <li>• Internal management of each movement (short-term tactics and long-term strategies)</li> </ul>
<p>Interviews (November 2017 - July 2018) Applied to: resistance movement analysis 6 participants: 5 men and 1 woman</p>	<p>Areas covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further examination of the characteristics and internal management of each movement (genealogy; evolution of tactics and strategies, main milestones reached).</li> <li>• Further examination of the map of agents (degree of importance of the stakeholder developers, decisive people within the resistance movement, other groups that it is linked to and its influences).</li> <li>• Tourism and urban policy (relationship between the city model and the tourist model to the project that they oppose, perception of the questioning of benefits of tourism).</li> </ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors

In order to select the projects to study, the fulfilment of four criteria was taken into account:

- (1) New build projects or rehabilitation of urban space;
- (2) Projects located in places of interest for tourism development;
- (3) Projects that incorporate services, facilities or similar attributes of a tourist nature;
- (4) Projects that have generated social resistance reactions as a response.

The six projects selected were analysed using technical and dissemination documentation published by the promoters of each project. In order to create the analysis model of the UGMs, the starting point was three dimensions proposed by Romero et. al, (2017). As a result, new analysis categories were developed for this study (Table 2).

Social movements and their grievances regarding the projects were analysed based on participatory observation of their activities, the results of discussion groups, interviews and the material provided by the movements during field work (publications on social networks, articles, statements and similar). As a result, two discussion groups and six interviews were carried out in order to further examine the characteristics of their movement and activities, whose participants were selected as representative leaders of each of the six movements. The profiles of the participants and the issues addressed can be consulted in Table 1, and as with the systematisation of the analysis and the results, they have been organised according to the UGMs model shown in Table 2.

### **The Costa del Sol -Málaga: urban growth machines and resistance movements in tourist destinations and its area of influence**

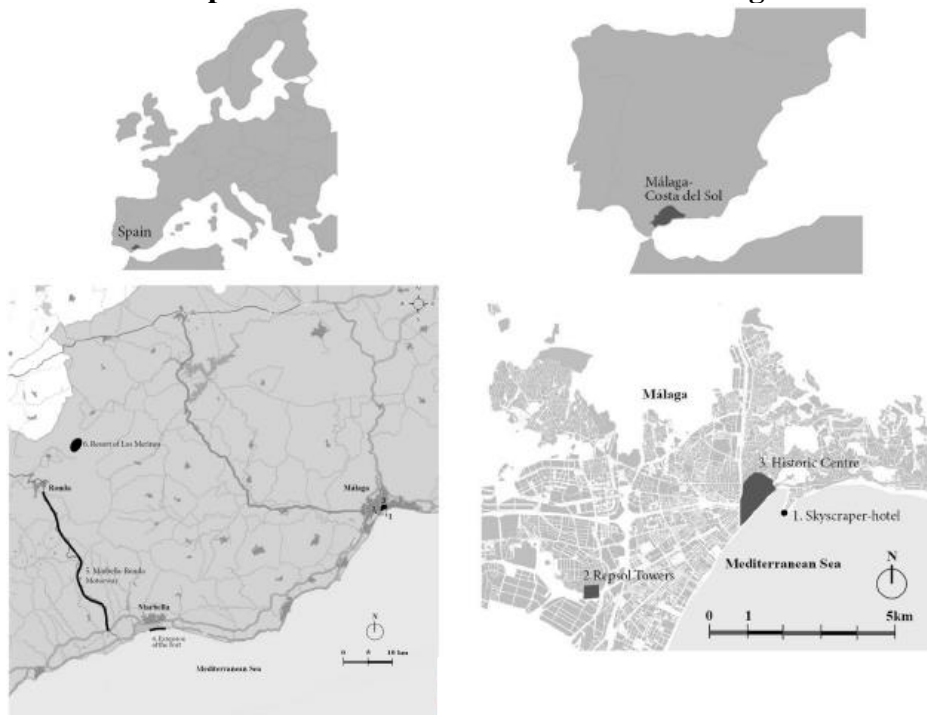
The Costa del Sol (CS) is the largest urban agglomeration in southern Spain, and has been one of the most important tourist destinations in the Mediterranean region since the 1960s. It is undoubtedly a prime example of an urban growth machine in a semi-peripheral region of late capitalism. However, the CS has a very large area of influence and includes other different types of tourists. Along with the sun and sea form of tourism, based on the construction of urban spaces for temporary stays, the area of influence stretches for more than 50 km over the inland mountains to Ronda, with golf courses, luxury hotels, large resorts, etc., and ultimately has the same growth model. In addition to Ronda being a cultural destination and the Serranía de Ronda a rural destination, they are therefore attractions for a constant flow of day-trippers from the

CS, who subsequently want to invest in a second property inland. On the other hand, growth in the city of Malaga cannot be understood without the CS. The airport is located in Malaga (the most important in the south of Spain), and the terrestrial communications hub (train and roads) goes through Malaga. Although Malaga is now a cultural destination, some of its projects are metropolitan and Malaga is beginning to rival Marbella in terms of investors, projects, hotels, etc.

Tourism is the most important productive sector and has completely transformed this territory, its society and its economy. The result is the urban development of 75% of the beachfront of the coastline; greater growth in the range of unregulated tourist places (836,880) in relation to regulated ones (146, 207). With regard to demand, the figures are constantly increasing. In 2017, the CS enjoyed the best year of tourism in its history with 12.5 million visitors, with an overall economic impact in the province of 13.83 billion Euros (Turismo y Planificación, 2018).

This territory has not stopped growing and the various administrations (European, central and regional) have continued to invest in infrastructure (Romero et al., 2015). This is not exclusive to the CS, but instead takes place in other well-established coastal tourist destinations like the Costa Blanca, Costa Dourada and the Balearic Islands, with an important role of second homes (Rovira and Antón-Clavé 2014, Murray et.al, 2017). In fact, the growth in Spanish coastal destinations during the crisis has been characterised by: (1) the encouragement of new public policies to stimulate growth (Romero et al., 2017); (2) the configuration of a scenario of precarious employment associated with the loss of jobs and labour reform (Cañada, 2015); (3) the promotion of tourism as a successful sector and a solution for economic recovery (Murray et.al, 2017); and (4) the emergence of technologies that facilitate peer-to-peer relationships (Airbnb, HomeAway, Niumba, etc.).

**Map 1: CASE STUDY: Costa del Sol-Málaga**



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the IECA (Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia) and the IdeAndalucía

Within this context of growth, the direct consequences of urban growth machines are studied in specific places and projects, via the comparison and systematisation of six projects, and the resistance movements they have caused. The future development of all the interventions is directly linked to tourism and property development:

**1 Skyscraper-hotel in the port of Malaga:** this would be the tallest building in the city, located in the dock of the port furthest from the coast and developed by an investment group from Qatar that has no experience in tourism. The resistance movement was formed in 2017 as the *Plataforma Defendamos Nuestro Horizonte* (Let's Defend Our Skyline Platform) with the support of 30 organisations.

**2 Repsol Towers:** a redevelopment project of an industrial area with a park with 4 residential skyscrapers and offices, a leisure-shopping centre and various hotel projects. It is located very close to a new area for attracting tourism, the western area of Malaga with the Russian Museum, the Automobile Museum, and the traditional fishing neighbourhood. The social movement, created in 2015 (Urban Forest of Malaga-UFB), is the only one that is proactive and which has produced an urban environmental consciousness.

**3 Historic Centre:** the conflict focuses on touristification, gentrification and social degradation. At present, the greatest problem is the coexistence of residents and tourists in properties used for tourism that are advertised on websites. We have included this case because since the end of the 1980s, the aim of the council has been to increase the resident population, and 75 million euros have been invested in multiple projects (Urban Plan of the EU, three Strategic Plans, the Local Agenda 21, two Urban Development Plans, Special Interior Reform Plan, Housing Plans, Master Plan for Soho (cultural neighbourhood) and the Integrated Sustainable Urban Development of the EU (SUD-strategy), Tourism has penetrated the Historic Centre to such an extent that any project incorporates Tourism as the core of its strategy. For example, the "SUD-strateg" that is being implemented in 2019 aims to resolve tourism-related conflicts (housing, restaurants, coexistence between tourists and residents, etc.). The association of residents was established 25 years ago but it has become more belligerent since 2015, when coexistence between residents and tourists became intolerable.

**4 Extension of the Port of Marbella:** one of the largest megaprojects, because in addition to the extension of the fishing port (860 berths and a dry dock for 360 boats) there is commercial development and the construction of a hotel-skyscraper. The investment capital is coming from a Qatari property developer. The social movement is mainly comprised of women and has transcended the project to channel the voice of the people for other conflicts, e.g. they opposed the construction of five more skyscrapers in Marbella and the felling of trees in the city centre.

**5 Marbella-Ronda Motorway:** the project for a 32.8 km toll motorway crossing the Sierra Bermeja - a mountain range of high scenic, geological and environmental value - with the impact caused by several land clearings, tunnels and earthmoving works and an initial cost of 350 million Euros. The resistance movement is very wide-ranging because it affects several municipalities.

**6 Resort of Los Merinos (Ronda):** the construction of 800 properties, 3 5-star hotels and 2 golf courses in 890 hectares in land that was previously protected. The social movement arose among residents of Ronda in the 1990s.

The initiatives for the developments arise out the relationship between private and public stakeholders. The Administration facilitates each intervention, and there is always one of the three levels involved: state, regional, local. With regard to the current situation, several of the developments have not begun construction, but all have begun different administrative

proceedings in order to be carried out. The judicial authorities are also involved, and there are projects with court rulings against them (the Resort of Los Merinos and the Extension of the Port of Marbella), and others are subject to legal action (Urban Centre, Hotel-skyscraper in the port and the Repsol Towers of Malaga). In short, the Costa del Sol and many mature tourist destinations on the Spanish Mediterranean have various peculiarities that are characteristic of the theory of urban growth machines: a strong private sector (especially the banking sector), an autonomous local public sector with extensive powers for urban and tourist development, a large corporate influence on local politics, which is in many cases associated with politicalbusiness corruption.

**RESULTS: GROWTH AND DEGROWTH ON THE COSTA DEL SOL**

The results are divided into two parts. The first part develops the analysis model for UGMs in the case studies in the Costa del Sol, proposing 15 categories classified in three dimensions. The second compares the attitude towards tourism of promoters and resistance groups, as well as the implications of the proposals of resistance groups in terms of degrowth.

In the Dominant Ideas, the reasoning used by developers to justify projects is grounded in the idea of progress based on modernity, the market, employment, economic growth and the abundance of material goods as a necessary condition for the improvement of human quality of life. For the developers, there is a sense of moral urgency, as they state that *“modern times will oblige us to build the tower”* (Architect of the Skyscraper-hotel in the port), *“cities need to constantly evolve”* [...] *we should think about whether Malaga deserves to lose an investment of this nature”* (President of the Confederation of Businesspeople of Andalusia on Los Reporteros (television program, 2018). For the resistance movements, building a skyscraper, cutting down trees or removing green areas is not progress. They argue that *“they have changed our entire urban landscape, [...] for no reason, they simply said it was because the city needed to be modernised”* (Discussion group DG1).

**Table2: Categories that develop the analysis model of UGMs**

Dominant Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress</li> <li>• Economic reductionism</li> <li>• Indefinite growth in quantity and extension</li> <li>• Tourism as an economic engine and main conditioner</li> </ul>
Rules and Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cases of exceptional treatment in current legislation</li> <li>• Financial weakness of the councils</li> <li>• Incompliance with rules/laws</li> <li>• Institutional autism relating to citizens</li> </ul>
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical environment</li> <li>• Negative social impacts</li> <li>• Distant decision-making authorities and top-down processes</li> <li>• Public administration forms part of the urban growth machines</li> <li>• Rentier economy and land speculation</li> <li>• Medium and long-term strategy for the creation and profitability of fixed capital</li> </ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors

Economic reductionism can be seen in the reasoning of the developers, based around two beliefs: (1) the market is the most efficient mechanism for production and distribution, and the best model for regulating social relations; (2) private sector initiatives are what create wealth. The public administration must therefore be at the service of the private sector. As a result, the future of the territory is decided on the property market, and remains outside the control of citizens. The idea of no employment meaning no growth is the strongest argument of developers, who consider indefinite growth to be necessary. However, the resistance movements express doubts about this argument, given that details are never provided about the “*quality of employment, its temporariness or duration and distribution*” (Discussion group DG2).

The Rules and Laws that support the dominant ideas are applied in all the projects with cases of exceptional treatment in the current legislation. In jurisdictional spheres with specific legislation (roads, coasts, etc.), operations that breach current legislation are allowed. Social movements note this difference and argue that there are two types of administrative procedures: the ordinary, regulated one for ordinary citizens and small business owners; and the special, flexible and quick procedure for key actions in the territory, which is also often carried out behind the backs of citizens. Four of the six movements have denounced planning administrative controversies due to irregularities in some of the processes. This is the only route that manages to stop projects and the most relevant case is that of the Los Merino macro-resort, where “*the victory was via the contentious-administrative route [...]. And the other route that we took was the criminal proceedings route [...] we spoke to the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office [...] and an investigation was launched that concluded with the arrest of the Mayor and four more councillors in 2011*” (Discussion group DG1).

This exceptional situation is explained by the financial and political weakness of the councils. The lack of participation of municipalities in national public spending (between 12-15%) makes it necessary to seek alternatives in property construction, where taxes and licences are the almost exclusive means of funding (Díez Ripollés and Gómez-Céspedes, 2009). Tourist areas also have the spending from their increased population in summer (it multiplies by 2 or 3). In the case of the city of Malaga, urban regeneration initiatives are only concentrated in the centre of cities, while non-tourist neighbourhoods are neglected (Marín Cots et al. 2017). With the implementation of the SUD-strategy the conflicts are not resolved, and instead are being exacerbated as outlined in the document produced by the association of residents in which they denounce “*tavernisation*” (Document of the Association of Residents presented at the work group of Perchel-Lagunillas SUD-strategy, 2019). This takes place alongside the complexity of urban planning legislation in the Spanish system (unique in relation to the rest of Europe) and it results in a significant municipal urban planning problem: ‘*à la carte*’ urban development, (Seguido, and Hernández, 2015).

There are two conflicts in this category: incompliance with rules/laws and the institutional autism relating to citizens. In the first case, social movements perceive arbitrariness from the institutions because compliance with regulations is not promoted, and the legal provisions of the European Union on municipal legislation are ignored (such as the lack of civic participation in environmental projects in the case of UFB, excessive noise in the Historic Centre of Malaga, etc.). What is even more serious - the legislation is not applied either because of ignorance or a lack of political will - is the case of incompliance with the planning standards that prevent the implementation of businesses in residential buildings (Marín Cots et al. 2017). The resistance movements in the centres of Malaga and Marbella denounce high levels of noise, occupation of the public highway, preference for commercial and hospitality uses as opposed to residential

uses, and the most radical proposal, the change from residential to tourism uses in the entire historic centre of Malaga: *“the few residents who have not been thrown out have to withstand the impunity of the #Noise and the mayhem #MálagaCiudadGenial (MalagaFantasticCity)”* (Association of Residents of the Historic Centre of Malaga via @vecinosmalaga).

In the second case, institutional autism, the public participation processes in projects are reduced to mere formalities. Often, the public administration is both “judge and interested party” in contentious issues, with the sole option of appealing to the judicial authority. This is the case of the annulment of the public consultation on the UFB and the reduction of the public exhibition periods for the skyscraper-hotel. A wall of silence is created and technical language, including legal jargon, is overused. For this reason, in all the resistance movements there is a perception of defencelessness and distrust of the political class, and they state that *“Citizens count. We have an opinion, critical spirit and even proposals”* (Let’s Defend Our Skyline Platform via @noalrascacielos). It is alleged that the so-called “governance” is not put into practice, despite being the “objective” in all the planning documents. According to them, *“the plans do not protect at all”* (Discussion group DG2) therefore *“civic participation takes place in the courts”* (Discussion group DG2).

The Ideas and Rules facilitate the urban growth machine through large projects and urban regeneration. These projects are designed with notable effects on the physical environment, and the damage increases exponentially with the size of the project. Some examples are the loss of ecosystems in the case of Los Merinos, located in a space declared a Biosphere Reserve or the case of the Marbella-Ronda Motorway, *“for two reasons, firstly, the volume involved with the earthmoving works [...] and secondly, because the peridotites go hand-in-hand with biodiversity values that are extremely high on a global level”* (Discussion Group DG1). Other impacts concern the vulnerability of the coastline, pollution and the loss of green spaces in the case of the UFB and the felling of trees in Marbella. There is a particular sensitivity towards the degradation of the natural, rural and urban landscape. The negative impact on the landscape is the strongest argument of the movement against the skyscraper in the port of Malaga, and it has been supported by ICOMOS, which has recommended cancelling the project based on the *“permanent irreversible impact of the building on nature, on the two scales analysed: the landscape heritage of Malaga and that of its port. In both cases, both from a visual and objective point of view, as well as from a subjective and symbolic perspective, the impact would damage the image and the exceptional value of the landscape in the city, and in particular the scenic heritage”* (ICOMOS, 2018).

The negative social impacts are also notable. The main impacts affect the quality and life and daily space of citizens, with the clearest examples being those that take place in neighbourhoods. In the case of the UFB, there are *“two districts that are very affected by overcrowding, due to population density and very precarious urban planning conditions”* (Discussion Group DG1), in the Historic Centre of Malaga, where the residents complain that *“in the centre that right to live in one’s neighbourhood in peace has been lost a little, and so has the right not be photographed from the moment you get up”* (Discussion Group DG1). The results are clear: in the Historic Centre of Malaga, the processes of gentrification and touristification have resulted in the expulsion of half the population (a decline from 8,968 residents in 1981 to 4,720 in 2015). The conflict is clear and ongoing: while there are residents who feel *“that the investments that have been made in the historic centre of Malaga, unlike those made in any other neighbourhood, have not been aimed at improving the quality of life of residents in the area, but rather have sought to evict them”* (Del Sol, 2018), some councillors in the local government state publicly that *“the Centre must no longer be residential first and*

*foremost*” (in Sau and Muñoz, 2018).

The following category of projects is the reliance on distant decision-making authorities and top-down processes. The projects are backed externally, by speculative international investment funds (as well as tour operators and hotel companies), as in the case of the port of Marbella and the Skyscraper-hotel. The social movements argue that a city model that differs to the approved plans is imposed on them. As a result of all this, they call for “the right to the city and the territory”: “*we began to think... in Marbella are we, the citizens, ever going to have the right to the city or will we remain under the control of Gil (a former local ruler associated with an era of political-business corruption), and the investors of the sheikh (investors in the Port extension project ...? (Discussion group DG1). In turn, decisions that reduce the power of local action are taken in Madrid by the national government; this is the case with the SUD-strateg, which in Spain mainly goes towards funding new building works, in the Centre of Malaga construction it is 72% of the budget of 11.8 million Euros (OMAU, 2015).*

The desire to attract investment means that the public administration forms part of the urban growth machines; public facilities are granted in order for private investors to implement urban planning and create infrastructures, and always justified by the creation of employment. In the case of the extension of the Port of Marbella, the Council of Marbella forms part of the joint venture that is implementing the project. The citizens in the movements are clear about this: “*It is necessary to call a spade a spade [...] that is to say, when we talk about investment we are talking about the get-rich-quick culture, easy money*” (Discussion group DG1).

Various resources are put at the service of UGMs. Developers use the powerful social networks of public institutions and their authority, as well as other commercial and financial companies, the local media, etc., in order to create a good image of themselves to present to society. On the contrary, although resistance movements are supported by numerous groups, they depend on the voluntary work of a few people, and a minimum provision of resources, “*in the clearly unequal battle, because we are talking about opposing the power of money using volunteer work*” (Discussion Group DG1). Media coverage of the project is through press and image campaigns in order to boost social receptiveness, and attract groups that have an influence on local public opinion. A good example is Los Merinos, which has already been prosecuted and documented, where media outlets and social groups were bought with surreptitious advertising and free activities. Around €500,000 was invested in different payments and contracts such as the “*Charri Channel which was given €12,000€ a year for a three-year renewable period, another TV channel Bel was given €3,000 a month for a period renewable for three years. [...] Another local newspaper, La Gaceta de Ronda [...] received more than €125,000 in two years [...] it was owned by the mayor, the one from 2006, who promoted the entire project [...] all that is shown in the contracts.*” (Discussion group DG1).

Another trait that characterises several of the case studies is that they are based on a rentier economy and land speculation, where institutions participate with their land in the speculative process (e.g. Los Merinos and UFB). There is an absence of municipal policies against the inflation of land and property prices. This attitude is logical if the driving force of the local economy consists solely of the continuous growth of the added value of land via the transformation of the existing city (in Malaga), and the creation of new urban settlements (on the coastline) in any part of the municipality, creating an unsustainable urban structure. Spain, and especially its tourist areas, form part of the secondary circuit of the accumulation of global capital in fixed capital, with excessive property investment based on the constant increase in the price of land. Each project forms part of a long-term plan, which takes advantage of the

price revaluations of land close to the previous project. Even if a project is stalled due to economic or legal problems, the magnitude of the capital involved and the large future profits mean that the development will start up again when those obstacles have been overcome, even if it is many years later. The case of Los Merinos in Ronda is paradigmatic, as it is the oldest of the cases studied, and there is extensive analysis over time, with twelve transactions before and after reclassifications which gradually increased the value of the land (Díez Ripolles and Gómez-Cespedes, 2009).

### **Attitudes towards tourism of stakeholders involved and degrowth readings of the proposals of resistance groups**

Among the dominant ideas, there is also the idea put forward in tourist destinations like the Costa del Sol that tourism is the driving force and determining factor in the collective imagination. It is used by developers in order to justify and defend their actions, such as at the skyscraper-hotel in the Port, where they argue that *“the city has the opportunity to move [...] towards the new ‘modernity’ offered by its current period of economic, cultural and social boom that its tourism strength provides”* (Seguí, 2017). Resistance movements are certain that the property business is the key to tourism development on the CS, and tourism is a *“mere justification for speculation”* (Discussion Group DG2). They also warn that the economic impact does not seep trickle down to all of society to an equal extent: it is very beneficial for developers and operators, but not always for citizens. The social movements use the data in the Urban Indicators study (National Statistics Institute, 2018) where the municipalities of the CS are among the 20 towns with the most overnight stays by tourists in Spain - on a list of 126 cities - but they are also towards the bottom of the list of 20 cities with the lowest average annual income per household. They also state that tourism can destroy employment in other sectors, *“like a cancer”* (Discussion Group DG2), and it has a significant cost on the opportunity for the development of other areas which could be beneficial for the Costa del Sol-Malaga, *“there is no investment in renewable energy, in R+D, etc., because everything is directed towards tourism”* (Discussion Group DG2).

However, although most resistance movements fight against the negative effects on the physical, urban, social and even economic environment, tourist activity is not questioned. Social movements expressly stress that *“we are not against tourism”* (Discussion group DG2) and *“we are annoyed when people associate us with tourism-phobia (Historic Centre Interview)”*, *“the anti-tourists label is used by developers”* (Discussion group DG2) in order to discredit resistance movements. They feel that tourism on the CS is beneficial, but it is necessary to rectify its excesses and prevent it from imposing itself as an economic monoculture in the area. There is a call for greater planning and regulation in order to prevent tourist saturation, and they even use their own arguments to defend stopping projects and alternative proposals such as the UFB: *“that natural heritage would be sold, which is what happens in other places like London, as attractions relating to tourism”* (Discussion Group DG2). They also believe that in order for the planning to be effective, the process must take into account the full integration of the *“rights of citizens to their city, to participate and express their opinions, and that should be binding on the Administration, that is to say, it should not just be a right to make claims in a process, participation for us should be collaborative”* (Discussion Group DG1).

In this regard, a key issue in the design of this study was to determine the feelings of stakeholders towards strategies of tourism degrowth. From the results of the first discussion group and the documentary analysis, it was deduced that the proposals of the resistance movements are aligned with the degrowth approach, although not explicitly. The second

discussion group was asked if the concept of degrowth could represent the six resistance groups. All the representatives concurred affirmatively in their personal stance, and believed that this stance also coincided with the group in five of the six cases, with the exception being the Skyscraper. All the resistance groups understand the criteria associated with degrowth (reduction of needs, consumption, of construction in general, of the sizes of infrastructures, the redistribution of resources, prioritising the local over the global), which is also linked to a demand for more information, more rigour and the democratisation of forms of governance, always from the bottom-up, because as they point out “*we have lost the Welfare State, [...] and therefore it is at a local level where it is possible to have greater strength and that is where we emerge*” (Discussion group DG1).

## **DISCUSSION**

The study has looked at the new processes of tourist growth and the conflicts that arise from the perspective of local social movements. In the literature review, it was observed that in tourist destinations, tourism is used to feed urban growth machines (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Kimelberg, 2011; Lang and Rothenberg, 2016), while the application to the case study confirms that social movements feel that tourist development is associated with speculative building and property development.

The study proposes an analysis model of UGMs applied to tourist destinations, which that uses the analysis of projects and the resistance movements they produce as its basis. The first idea that is put forward is the demystification of the belief that economic growth is progress, in the way that it is measured at present. The developers of UGM projects use the common arguments of neoclassical economics - modernity, market and economic growth - for human welfare. However, as the report by the National Statistics Institute (2018) shows, this does not happen on the CS. In the dominant ideas, the public sector is also seen to be at the service of private enterprise.

With regard to the dominant ideas, it may be considered that the approaches of the resistance movements to projects adopt a position closer to the premises of degrowth (Hall, 2009). Social resistance movements defend the tangible, the specific and the everyday, i.e. lived space (Lefebvre, 2013; Soja 2008). In turn, they advocate stopping projects, reducing their effects and carrying out alternative proactive proposals from a civic level with positive environmental effects.

In the dimension of norms and laws, the national and regional levels are linked, which is what happens with the infrastructure projects (Romero et al, 2017), and the local scale is also key for the implementation of ‘*à la carte*’ urban planning for the developers of UGMs. This is what makes the uniqueness of urban planning in the Spanish case possible (Seguido, and Hernández, 2015); it is liquid urban planning that coincides with the conceptual lines of Bauman (2013). Exceptional treatment in the application of regulations is common in tourist destinations in developing countries, located on the fourth pleasure periphery, as shown in cases in the Caribbean and Central America, and this increases unequal geographical development (Harvey, 2013) and so-called neo-colonialism. In turn, institutional autism, the lack of civic participation processes and decisions taken from the top-down have a negative influence on the governance of the tourist destinations, they prevent a shared vision and hinder conflict management (Bramwell & Sharman, 2009; Milano, 2018). Proper governance practices are known, but are not applied.

With regard to tourism, no rejection is observed despite the fact that all the cases are justified

using the benefits of tourist activity. Two reflections stand out in this respect. On one hand, there is the assimilation of tourist activity as part of the socio-economic and cultural “DNA” of the CS, which is a limitation on thinking creatively about the future of the region. On the other, the attraction towards greater control and a reduction of the quantitative dimensions of tourist development affects its classic variables and the way of evaluating its positive evolution, based on unlimited growth (number of tourists and facilities). What emerges is that despite the restructuring and rejuvenation measures that have been launched in mature coastal destinations such as the Qualifica Plan on the Costa del Sol, the improvements in sustainability are not noted by citizens. Meanwhile, in cities such as Malaga, the results of the different tourism strategies have increased tourist activity, generating new conflicts which are perceived by residents.

There is a conflict in the dichotomy of interests between the growth promoters and those affected by its impact. From the perspective of developers, the cases analysed constitute a representation of the tacit pro-growth urban-tourism agreement between the four groups of key stakeholders. From the perspective of those affected, the existence of this agreement is confirmed, and the lack of information and transparency in the processes to implement these projects is something that is repeated in all cases.

Ultimately, in UGMs the relationship between developers and resistance movements displays a pattern of inverse symmetry: (1) consolidated and indisputable arguments, and top-down vs bottom-up arguments that are in the process of being created and questioned; (2) quick vs slow progress times; (3) the concentration of political, economic and media power vs collaborative and voluntary work with a few resources; (4) the exchange value and the domination of space vs the value of use and collective appropriation of space; (5) the production of space vs the creation of the city; (6) attention to the object or project (product) vs attention to the process (daily life); (7) promotion of the private vs defence of what is shared. All of this is linked to the call for the right to the city (Lefebvre, 2013), and when they are understood together on a broader city scale, they can be understood as a collective practice calling for spatial justice (Soja, 2008), as seen in the cases analysed where the resistance movements call for quality of urban life, the right to the landscape, environmental protection, etc. However, above all, the resistance movements call for active and binding participation processes for citizens in order to attain a real right to the city, which is aligned with the need to undertake collaborative planning processes in tourism destinations (Huxham, 2003; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Casanuevas et al. 2016).

This study has an essentially qualitative nature applied to a geographic area. Its limitations include the difficulty in obtaining quantitative data that enable a deeper knowledge of the categories identified in the analysis model of the UGMs and a comparison of the model with other areas of study. However, these limitations present opportunities for continuing the work in the future. This study encourages a further examination of other future lines of work, including: (1) identifying comparable quantitative and qualitative comparable indicators associated with the discourse of the UGMs; (2) identifying and checking alternative indicators linked to positive processes in terms of local and sustainable development; (3) further examining the characterisation of resistance movements encouraging the transfer processes characteristic of action research, especially with regard to the options of network working and pooling experiences; (4) increasing knowledge in relation to collaborative planning in tourist destinations, especially on tools for preventing conflicts, and the processes of co-design, codevelopment and co-implementation of strategies and actions; (5) looking deeper at the conceptualisation of tourist degrowth and the knowledge of applicable measures in saturated tourist destinations.

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