# GENTRIFICATION AND URBAN HERITAGE

## THE CASE OF ALBAYZÍN

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis unites two theoretical frameworks, one from gentrification research and the other from heritage studies, to show how the two reinforce each other in populated urban historical heritage sites. The empirical case presented is the old Moorish neighborhood of Granada, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1994. The argument forwarded is that gentrification is taken over by a value system dictated by heritage, and this changes the "classical" composition of the gentrifiers and the way the process is being shaped.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'gentrification' has evolved rapidly during the past decades, breaking through the limits of academic discourse into popular parlance and expanding up to the point of endangering its own idiomatic existence (Bondi 1999). Since the phenomenon is usually characterized as "the leading edge of neoliberal urbanism" (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008: xvii), it has developed alongside other phenomena related to the new economic and social practices of the globalizing neoliberal order, such as the rise of Global Heritage and its "hegemonic discourse" (Smith L. 2006). Although the interrelation of the two has been generally disregarded by researchers (de Pieri 2010:381), the expansion of both processes resulted in the intensification of their concurrences in different geographical locations, thus capturing the attention of scholars (cf. Herzfeld 2010). Present thesis explores a specific case of such concurrence in the old Moorish neighborhood of the Andalusian town of Granada, the Albayzín.

With each new empirical case that has been explored, gentrification became a broader and broader term, and the case explored in my thesis will necessarily have the same effect. Likewise, 'heritage' is a concept bearing multiple meanings, powerful enough to affect the urban constitution of the neighborhood and direct gentrification, the same way as latter process can shape the heritage discourse of the inhabitants.

The main question of my research is whether there is a tension between the institutional discourse on heritage and the local populations' interpretation of "their inherited" physical and cultural space, and if so, how does this influence urban processes? Others have already examined "the use of historic conservation to justify gentrification" (Herzfeld 2010:s259), and my aim is to disclose how 'heritage' shapes and is being shaped by the process of gentrification.

In Chapter 1 I provide a consistent and critical review of the debates shaping theories of gentrification and heritage. I will focus on the common points of the two to lay down a solid theoretical background for the empirical discussion. I will end the chapter by introducing the concept of 'heritagification' which I conceive of as the "uneasy relationship" between heritage and gentrification under specific local and historical circumstances.

In Chapter 2 I approach the research site and present some of the concepts and terms that will be used in the empirical chapter, based on previous studies that have been done in Granada. In the second part I turn to my sources and the methodology used in my research.

In the three sections of Chapter 3 I present my findings. First, I examine the circumstances under which the Albayzín has devalorized since the Christian conquest, and argue that this process should be viewed as one of 'historical devalorization'. I will argue that in this specific case the emergence of a 'historical value' closely linked to the 'authorized heritage discourse' has perverted the usual effects of disinvestment, creating value on its own. The aim of this section is to analyze the process of gentrification in Albayzin in a wider timeframe and from a political-economic perspective. In the second and third sections of Chapter 3 I attempt to analyze how the process of gentrification takes place and is perceived by the residents of the neighborhood, and then turn to the meaning of heritage in the local context. The aim of this discussion is to bring out the contradictions and conflicts emerging from giving meaning to the past and projecting into the future.

# 1. GENTRIFICATION AND HERITAGE

Urban change—probably the most neutral and untendentious denomination of the phenomena I shall discuss in my thesis under different names—is by definition coeval with urban life itself, for immutability is the least sound characterization of any social, or in fact any physical, phenomena. Nevertheless, the specificity of 'urban change' in regard to the human actors involved in the process has strengthened alongside the rise and consolidation of the 'urbanites' *per se* as a socioeconomic class, the *bourgeoisie* of the 19th century. Many researchers consider the processes of urban change of that epoch as clear examples of 'proto-gentrification' (Clark 2005; Petsimeris 2005; Smith 1996), while others dismiss it as simple 'precursors' to gentrification proper (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008). Besides theoretical reasons, I am also encouraged by empirical facts of my chosen research site to consider *historical examples of gentrification* as subtypes of the same urban phenomenon introduced as 'gentrification' in 1960s' Britain (Glass 1964). Before presenting the 'story' of Granada in a subsequent chapter—indispensable for any piece of urban research wishing to answer the "call for 'a geography of gentrification' which takes into account context, locality, and temporality in more detail" (Lees et al. 2008:187; cf. Lees 2000)—I will turn to the theoretical background that shapes my research: the colorful interplay between gentrification and heritage in all their economic-political, ideological, commonsensical and philosophical manifestations.

After premising my not entirely original views on the 19th century origin of gentrification, I should mention that the concept of "heritage" will be given a similar genealogy—again renouncing any claims to originality—and considered a related phenomenon, although the relation remains deplorably understudied. What follows, therefore, is a short review of the

gentrification literature and the Spanish reaction to the international debates, and a review of the 'heritage' literature and my own conclusion about the tension between the *institutional* and *personal/communal* interpretations of the concept, both playing an important role in the gentrification process of a populated 'world heritage site'.

## *1.1.   From classical to atomized gentrification*

Reflecting on the future of gentrification rather than its past, Loretta Lees and her co-authors (2008:246) make the statement that "the 'gentrification era' has just begun", after having presented the many mutated and contemporary forms of this urban process. The statement, however, does not refer to the actual beginning point of a widely acknowledged "global urban strategy …, a consummate expression of neoliberal urbanism" (Smith 2002:446), "one of the major 'leading edges' of contemporary metropolitan restructuring" (Hamnett 1991:174). The name and the definition of the phenomenon, as provided by Ruth Glass in 1964, has been of major importance in the analysis of what became known as 'classical gentrification', although it conveyed the possibilities for its temporal and geographical extension since the very beginning, through its conceptual linkage with traditional English rural class structure (Lees et al. 2008:4)[1]. In its original conceptualization, gentrification referred to "the process by which working class residential neighborhoods are rehabilitated by middle class homebuyers, landlords and professional developers" (Smith 1982:139), or, slightly more general in tone,  it reflects "the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use" (Lees et al. 2008:xv). After half a century of scholarship, the driving force behind gentrification started being identified with global movements of capital within a "world urban system" (Lees et al.

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[1] Lees, Slater and Wyly remind their readers how „the term was designed to point to the emergence of a new 'urban gentry', paralleling the 18th- and 19th-century rural gentry familiar to readers of Jane Austen who comprised the class strata below the landed gentry, but above yeoman farmers and peasants" (2008:4; cf. Hamnett 2003). Having considered this, they view the "mutated" phenomenon of "rural gentrification" (2008:135–138) as a return to the original conceptual irony of the term.

2008:80), and the geography of the phenomenon extended to the point of permitting David Ley (1996:34) one of the broadest definitions, describing gentrification as "renovation and redevelopment on both residential and non-residential sites".[2] To close the line of possible definitions, I will quote here the one considered to be broad, still targeted enough to satisfy the present urban realities (cf. Lees et al. 2008:159): "gentrification is a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital" (Clark 2005:263).

Curiously enough, more recent forms of urban renovation and redevelopment (*new-build gentrification*, cf. Lees et al. 2008:138–148) in global cities resemble better the "proto-gentrification" of the 19th century Europe. Acknowledging the importance of capital and its new ideological accessory, neoliberalism, it is understandable for certain phenomena to reappear in a world economic system that has revived neoclassical economics and made gentrification a true "global strategy". Critics of such strategies are also inspired by 19th century critiques, most notably that of Engels in *The Housing Question* (cited in Smith 1996), and the critical approach facilitated by the notion itself through its "political value" is what keeps 'gentrification' alive today as a conceptual tool (Lees et al. 2008:155).[3]

In its historical manifestations 'gentrification' has had a more personal denomination than the later reference to an elusively compound 'gentry', having little if any relevance for many cultural settings (for example, in our case, Spain). It has been called *Haussmann* (or haussmannization), alluding to the bonapartist Prefect of Paris who demolished the centrally concentrated houses of the poor to build the now famous Parisian boulevards (Smith

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[2] Here I have to note that in a previously cited early definition by Neil Smith, a theoretical distinction was being made between gentrification and redevelopment, considering the latter as involving "not rehabilitation of old structures but the construction of new buildings on previously developed land" (Smith 1982: 139), and therefore *not* gentrification.

[3] The authors defend the term by a strong comparison when arguing that "the difference between 'regeneration' and 'gentrification' is akin to the gap between 'terrorist' and 'freedom fighter'" (Lees et al. 2008:56).

1996:33).[4] In this very early example, Friedrich Engels saw a more general pattern (observed by him in the so-called 'Improvements' of Manchester), and the concept already bore the main constituents of gentrification: improvement, displacement, and population change. Regarding the latter element, the term 'embourgeoisement' shed a brighter light on the new inhabitants of these improved city centers. Although these were only scattered phenomena, "historically discrete events" of the nineteenth century (Smith 1996:35), which had no continuity with the postwar urban restructuring, and were limited to Paris, London, and several larger European cities—according to Smith (1996)—its occurrence in Granada, doubtfully a major industrial center at that time, obliges me to discuss it in a following chapter.

One of the most important changes in the appreciation of gentrification was a shift between purely descriptive approaches to more systematic explanations regarding the emergence and operations of the process. After many years of state-led suburbanization in both the United States and United Kingdom, conceived as a social stabilizer by government plans such as the New Deal or the Greater London Plan accordingly (cf. Lees et al. 2008), a return of middle-class homebuyers to the by then depreciated central historical neighborhoods was being observed in the 1960s. These central areas were mainly characterized by old Victorian buildings, most of them retaining 19th century amenities and being in an advanced stage of disrepair. A preference for such architecture instead of the comfortable modern uniformity of the suburbs had to be attributed to a radical change in the taste and lifestyle of the baby-boom generation maturing in the liberal environment of the 1960s. Besides economic factors like increased commuting costs, the main reasons behind the choices of this group of people challenging the neoclassical perspectives on urban development were seen as cultural. For

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[4] Such personal designation is perhaps solely comparable with that of 'Rachmanism", referring to „the unscrupulous tactics of the landlord Peter Rachman, who operated in London in the 1960s" (Lees et al. 2008:14).

these 'urban pioneers'—as they have become referred to—the value of a home and a neighborhood was not set by its ability to provide a safe environment for upbringing children, but by its historical value conceived as architectural heritage, and a diversity of habitants. The rapid spread of the process was fomented by government initiatives snapping at the possibility of revitalizing decaying neighborhoods, and complementing the private investments of the pioneers through "improvement grants", "sweat equity" or "homesteading" programs (Lees et al. 2008).[5] Bank loans for such improvements only became available after gentrification had reached a considerable size, due to the redlining policies of most banks. After renouncing these policies, however, private financial institutions became the most active agents in gentrification, and this becomes obvious when looking at an ad designating Citibank as "the bank that helped preserve Park Slope's history" (Lees et al. 2008:29), in reference to one of the classical neighborhoods in the gentrification literature.

At the end of the 1970s the similarities between the many cases of gentrification which had been observed led early researchers to draw different models reflecting the evolution of gentrification (Clay 1979; Gale 1979). For Phillip Clay gentrification was a linear process evolving in four stages, from the individual improvements carried out by pioneers, to the mature form in which more capital is invested, the newcomers are of higher economic status than the first improvers and the real-estate speculations lead to more displacement (1979:57–59). Dennis Gale (1979), on the other hand, focuses more on the displacement issue and the population change. These two approaches are somewhat representative of the later debate between advocates of the so-called "production-side explanations" on the one hand, and "consumption-side" on the other.

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[5] The funds provided in London by the Housing Acts, the Architectural Heritage Fund or the National Heritage Fund had to „be met pound by pound by the improver" and initially had no restrictions, thus favoring wealthier improvers and the immediate reselling of the house after renovation. The „sweat equity" and „homesteading" favored in New York City meant that the prospective owners were doing most of the renovation work themselves (Lees et al. 2008:16–23).

Neil Smith (1979) was the first to focus on the production of gentrification through his "rent gap" theory published shortly after Gale's article. He attempts to explain "why some neighborhoods are profitable to redevelop while others are not" (1979:541). Smith argues against the optimistic image created by the 'back-to-the-city movement'[6], stating that it is capital, and not the individual consumers (pioneers), returning to the city, and that the only "consumer preference" shaping gentrification processes is "the preference for profit" (1979:540). In Smith's view gentrification can be explained by the cyclical movement of capital, the process by which a previously disinvested area becomes once again profitable for investment. With time the original investment loses its value, being outrun by developments based on newer technologies, and thus the *ground rent,* or the rent that an owner can demand for the use of the property, also changes. In this way a gap comes into existence between the maximum acquirable rent according to the present use of the structure ('capitalized ground rend') and the possible revenues after a reinvestment that would bring about a "highest and best use" ('potential ground rent'). In short, this is what Smith calls a 'rent gap', and according to his theory, gentrification occurs when the gap grows wide enough for renovation to become profitable. After the reinvestment process completed, "the neighborhood has been 'recycled' and begins a new cycle of use" (Smith 1979:545; cf. 1996:65).

The above model led many researchers to look for different 'gaps' in the real-estate markets of gentrifying neighborhoods, but it has also attracted much criticism. Hamnett and Randolph (1986) for example developed their own "value gap" theory differentiating two methods of valuing property, one based on its rented value, while the other on its sale value. Where a gap opened between these two values, it became more profitable for the property to

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[6] This was one of the most powerful pro-gentrification initiatives taking place in New York City, lead by early gentrifier Everett Ortner who first established the Brownstone Revival Committee in 1968. The Committee also published an influential magazine (*The Brownstoner*) and established the annual Brownstone Conference in 1972 to fight against bank redlining of 'risky' districts. Finally, the Back to the City conference was established in 1974 (cf. Lees et al. 2008:6–7).

be sold. Chris Hamnett was at the same time one of Smith's major critics, pointing out the overwhelming power attributed by him to structural constraints while dismissing individual agency, and showing how this "unduly economist and deterministic" attitude still penetrates Smith's later writings (Hamnett 1992:117). Those advocating a consumption explanation of gentrification have mainly focused on the "changes in the industrial and occupational structure of advanced capitalist cities" (Lees et al. 2008:90), and of course have taken into account the individual strategies of the gentrifiers. The greatest "change" was the emergence of a post-industrial society and of a 'new middle class', opposing the conservative values of the old suburban middle class, advocating liberalism and a concern for diversity and authenticity (Hamnett 2003; Ley 1996). The question of which came first, the rent gap or the pioneers, might seem undue to the ardor of the production–consumption debates, yet as Hamnett shows, it bears much deeper theoretical significance: "if Smith is right, structure and capital is dominant, and choice and preference are the icing on the cake; but if Ley is right, collective social agency may play a key role in providing capitalism with market opportunities to exploit" (1998:415).

The integration of the two approaches had been called for as early as 1982 by Sharon Zukin (1982, 1987), and although today gentrification studies take into account both types of explanations, the way studies are put forward is influenced by the adopted methodology (Lees et al. 2008). In my thesis I attempt to combine the two in order to achieve a more complex picture of the gentrification in the Albayzín, and focus on the political-economic side as well as on the motivations of the gentrifiers.

As mentioned earlier, the idea of Victorian heritage ('Victoriana') and its conservation was of great importance for the pioneer gentrifiers of English, American, Canadian or Australian cities (see Badcock 1989; Jager 1986). It is normal for gentrifiers in different cultural settings to have a similar preference for local historical architecture and the 'distinction' mechanism

that it triggers. Likewise, (re)naming the phenomenon can allude to more localized forms of gentrification (like brownstoning, whitepainting, trendification etc.). All this helps describing the great variety of a globally undergoing process, and although many observations led to refutations of older theories and the creation of new ones, a general theory of gentrification is hardly conceivable. The latest integrating approach is setting the distinct case studies against globalization and the actuation of markets and individual actors in the global arena (Atkinson and Bridge 2005).

The study of gentrification in Spain began rather recently, especially after the year 2000, although not without important precedents (e.g. Vázquez 1992). The main reason for this delay—according to Duque Calvache (2010a)—has to do with the late dispersion of the international literature, and not that much with local urban realities. Along with the naturalization of a field of study, two 'tendencies' are inevitable, according to the same author: first, analyzing local processes according to the findings of the international scholarship, and second, translating the core concept into something affinitive in the local language.[7]Among the many variants that have appeared in the literature (*elitización*, *aristocratización*, *hidalguización)*, Duque Calvache (2010a:5) finds the French derivative *aburguesamiento* (embourgeoisement) to come closest to Spanish realities, the meaning of which can be easily intuited (just like gentrification for the English speaker). However, due to previous use of the term in a different context, he champions the use of 'gentrification', interestingly enough, in its English form.[8]

The first of the two tendencies mentioned before is dealt with by the same author in his doctoral thesis (Duque Calvache 2010b), basing his empirical research in the same

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[7] The article of Duque Calvache (2010a) is an analysis of the diffusion of the term 'gentrification' in Spanish scholarship, and not a literature review. For this latter purpose one should consult García Herrera and Díaz Rodríguez (2008).
[8] More general is the adaptation of the term as a neologism as *gentrificación* (just like *globalización*); cf. Rosón Lorente 2008.

neighborhood as present thesis, the Albayzín of Granada. He finds that as a result of local historical and structural constraints, the gentrification of Albayzín takes a different form than the one presented by classical gentrification or state-led gentrification. While the former corresponds to the stage model as proposed by Clay (1979; see above), state-led gentrification initiates with state involvement, followed by individual involvement (as exemplified by the Park buildings in Harlem in 1982, presented by Neil Smith 1996). In the case of Albayzín— the argument goes—gentrification cannot reach the extent of the classical forms, and even in its 3$^{rd}$ stage, when real-estate companies begin speculating in the neighborhood, the gentrified areas remain small, although the occurrences multiply. All this makes gentrification slow and unfinished, and gives more agency to small individual actors, a specificity named by the author "atomized gentrification" (Duque Calvache 2010b:423–437). According to Duque Calvache this type of gentrification can be generalized to other places which have the same background, and the literature presents three main peculiarities of the neighborhood: (1) the urban typology of low buildings, narrow and serpentiform streets (common to all European historical city centers), (2) the predominance of home ownership, even among the working class (common for Spanish cities), and (3) the heritage protection and conservation policies (common to all UNESCO sites). I will go into more detail regarding the context in the empirical chapter, but it is not my aim to test a theory which seems so closely linked to local realities that could hardly be applicable in any other context. It is, in my opinion, too early to set up models on the basis of the ongoing gentrification in Albayzín. Nevertheless Duque Calvache's study is the first one to attempt a generalization of the phenomenon and to connect the architectural and social dimensions of gentrification in the neighborhood.

There were some major previous local researches that have outlined the characteristics of urban change in the historical center of Granada. The very early study of Cecilia Hita (1996) analyzes the influence that the rehabilitation programs have had until the time of her research,

while Castelló Nicás (2003) performed an extensive analysis of the "urban renovation" in Albayzín, with a disproportionate focus on the architectural component. Alfredo Jiménez Núñez (1999) went the opposite direction in his book on the everyday life in the Albayzín, presenting his readers with the "minimal histories" of some of the "local faces", but also offering important information regarding the urban change during the past century. More voluminous researches have been carried out during 2000-2005, which ended in publications with a direct focus on gentrification (De Pablos 2005; Cabrera Medina 2009), combining physical with social, and including the 'institutional heritage' component of the UNESCO designation.

Apart from contributing to the singularity of the case, the fact of being a UNESCO World Heritage site makes Albayzín comparable with other urban heritage sites. There are a growing number of researches on the relation between historic heritage and gentrification (Evans 2002; Herzfeld 2009, 2010; Rubino 2005; Shaw 2005). There are also local concepts which seem to be adaptable in the case of Albayzín, like that of 'studentification' (Smith D. 2002, 2005), 'touristification' (Evans 2002; Gotham 2005), or the ultimate jaw-breaker, "heritagification" (Butler 2007).

Besides all this, my focus on the individual interpretation of heritage in Granada, the preference for either the Moorish or the Christian legacy allows for another interesting comparison along the idea of a "frontier" and that of "pioneering". Early gentrification was often too optimistically conceived as an "advancing frontier of revitalization" (Lees et al. 2008:122). Neil Smith however, condemns both the applied frontier imagery, saying that gentrification is only a "frontier on which fortunes are made" (1986:34), and the idea of pioneering: "The idea of "urban pioneers" is as insulting applied to contemporary cities as the original idea of "pioneers" in the US West. Now, as then, it implies that no one lives in the areas being pioneered—no one worthy of notice, at least" (1996:30).

In the Spanish context the 'frontier' has a similar historical connotation, reminiscent of the constantly changing inner frontier between the Muslim and the Christian territories during the *Reconquista*. David Coleman (2003) describes pre- and post-conquest Granada as a "frontier city" and as a "frontier society", arguing that the city retained its 'frontier' aspect for another century after the conquest, until the final expulsion of the moriscos. There are several reasons for such extension of the Spanish 'frontier' concept: first, the town was still referred to by its Christian officials as a "frontier city" ('*ciudad frontera*') in 1572; second, the coexistence, mix and clash of Moorish and Christian cultures had expended well beyond the time of the conquest; and finally, compared to other Castilian cities, post-conquest Granada "long housed a particularly fluid and dynamic frontier society, distinct from the more established social orders of many of Spain's other major cities" (2003:3). Coleman goes on to tell the story of Juan de la Torre, only "one of the thousands of Christian immigrants who came to Granada seeking opportunity and fortune in the decades after the city's 1492 conquest" (2003:13). It was a time of hazard and speculation that could bring unimaginable richness or disillusive bankruptcy while vainly looking for gold in the Darro (cf. 2003:29). It was back then, Granada, a frontier city "on which fortunes were made". It can be argued that the views shared by some Granadans regarding the "return of Islam" to the Albayzín is nothing but a mental reinstatement of the 'frontier', on which new fortunes—material and symbolic—are being achieved. Speaking of a "heritagification frontier" in the Albayzín would describe best—and in a most ironical tone—the discourse on heritage and gentrification in the neighborhood.

## 1.2.  *The duality of the 'heritage' concept*

After reviewing the main theories on gentrification and how they connect with the case of Albayzín, I now turn to the theoretical debates surrounding 'heritage' and the way they are played out in the neighborhood I am describing. My aim is to accentuate those issues which are common with the discourse on gentrification. As it will become apparent, the focus on *value*, *authenticity* and economic activities reflecting the postindustrial global economy, such as *tourism* are central to both, and especially important in our case. 'Heritage' is manufactured by the forces of production, and then consumed as "traditions" (Al-Sayyad 2001) or as "places" (Urry 1990, 1995). One of the debates emerging here is the one led by critics of the capitalist practices who caution that places or traditions can also wane with consumption, and finally disappear.

Acknowledging that 'heritage' is deeply rooted in human history and is indeed part of the human condition (Harvey 2001:320), it would seem odd to talk about an "invention of heritage". Nevertheless there is a clearly discernible historical process through which a new meaning has been 'invented', and by which heritage goods—let them be material or immaterial—are given new meanings and new uses in a systemically novel economic mode of production and consumption. For the sake of grasping this process I shall adopt Laurajane Smith's (2006:3) views that "all heritage is intangible", not "inherently valuable" and without any "innate meaning". Smith's disregard for the material existence of 'heritage' is not only a methodological choice, but tallies with her main argument that "there is, really, no such thing as heritage" (2006:11). Interesting enough, in a book focusing on the 'historic monument' as a physical and historical reality, Françoise Choay ([1992] 2001) seems to be expressing the same view. 'Heritage' is defined by Choay as "inherited property passed down in accordance

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with the law, from fathers and mothers to children"[9], while 'historic heritage' is to be viewed as "a resource intended for the enjoyment of a community whose scope has been broadened to planetary scale" (2001:1). While the former is a middle-range institutional definition created by the social structures of European individualism and property rights, the latter shows the going global of the same European set of values. As Choay argues, "historic heritage … refers at once to an institution and to a mentality" (2001:1). The idea of a mentality shaping the creation of 'historical heritage' and the 'historic monument' is recurring in the text, and stands at the core of her argument the same way as 'discourse' is fundamental for Smith.

It is the second half of the 19th century that scholars consider to have brought into being a new concept of heritage (Choay [1992] 2001; Pendlebury 2009; Smith L. 2006; Walsh 1992). For Smith that is the birth date of the "authorized heritage discourse" (AHD), representing this new institutional meaning of heritage. According to her "there is a hegemonic 'authorized heritage discourse', which is reliant on the power/knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts, and institutionalized in state cultural agencies and amenity societies" (2006:11). The discourse has a political-social function, and heritage is seen primarily as "a means for asserting, defending, or denying critical claims to power, land, legitimacy, and so forth" (Silverman 2010:1). The hegemonic position of the heritage discourse „undermines alternative and subaltern ideas about heritage" (Smith L. 2006:11), but one should not forget that these exist. The institutional nature of the new concept and discourse is thus represented by the state, a body of experts and the museum (Walsh 1992), and through their work were modern European national entities formed. Heritage was the only tangible way to link past with present, and the fact that the national past needed to be a glorious one in order to positively influence contemporary and future sentiments, made the selection of heritage a task

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[9] A similar etymology is given by Nezar Al-Sayyad (2001:2): "heritage' derives from the Old French *eritage,* meaning property which devolves by right of inheritance in a process involving a series of linked hereditary successions".

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for which great expertise was needed. Schildgen finds it ironic but true that "in Europe in the nineteenth century, recovering the medieval heritage became one of the cultural means to build nationalism, even though the European Middle Ages had no political entity parallel to the modern nation" (2008:167).

Alongside the new heritage protection rhetoric, different approaches have appeared, becoming evident in the opposition between the 'interventionists' and the 'anti-interventionists" (Choay [1992] 2001). These different ways of approaching the issue of heritage conservation will remain valid until today through the differentiation between 'preservation' and 'conservation' (Pendlebury 2009:33), or in other words, the degree in which a site should be changed, interfered with, or 'modernized'. According to Pendlebury (2009:33) this differentiation appeared in the 1960s and has gained importance especially in Britain, preservation denoting "a static concept applicable to a limited monumental heritage, «preservation as found»", while conservation is more dynamic, "a process of managing change while sustaining the essential qualities of place".

In the value-system of these heritage objects 'time' played the biggest role, creating such distinctions as "commemorative value" and "present day value" (Choay [1992] 2001). In the second part of my thesis I will build on the value theory presented by Alois Riegl ([1903] 1982) at the beginning of the 20th century, adopting his terminology for simplicity, although it has been readapted by many since its original formulation (e.g. Lipe 1984). According to Riegl commemorative value comprises 'historical value' and 'age value', which are somewhat conflicting:

> the historical value of a monument arises from the particular, individual stage it
> represents in the development of human activity in a certain field ... The more faithfully a
> monument's original state is preserved, the greater its historical value: disfiguration and

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decay detract from it … [while] as decay progresses, age-value becomes … all the more intensive in its impact on the beholder ... From the standpoint of age-value, one need not worry about the eternal preservation of monuments (Riegl [1903] 1982: 32-33; 34).

We should set aside his differentiation between 'historical' and 'age value'. Clearly, there is interplay between the two values and the degree of decay and intervention. Also, they are not as separated by 'present-day value' as presumed by Riegl. This latter, according to the same author, is made of 'use value' and 'art value': "use-value is indifferent to the treatment of a monument so long as the monument's existence is not affected and no concessions whatsoever are made to age-value" ([1903] 1982:39), while 'art value' is shared by monuments erected intentionally as pieces of art. This value system—born during the Renaissance but consolidated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century—cannot be separated from the 'heritage discourse', and we will meet its local manifestations in the third chapter.

Nevertheless it is obvious that 'heritage' could never be a mere object or place, for most important in its definition is "the faculty of memory" (Choay 2001)—they are what Nora calls *lieux de mémoire*—and memory can only be controlled through a hegemonic discourse (Smith L. 2006) within a large—preferably global—field of 'consensus' (Pendlebury 2009) and a "new global *habitus"* (Herzfeld 2010:s259). The institutionalization of heritage means none the less that "those who decide what is worthy of preservation and how it should be preserved, are basically deciding what is worth remembering" (Walsh 1992:87).

Although the original meaning of 'heritage' has been institutionalized by the nation-states first through their legal systems and later by a more direct nationalist political-ideological agenda, the truly institutional form of 'heritage' is represented by those national and

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international organizations dealing exclusively with it.[10] Between 1931 and 1965 the first examples of what Smith (2006:87) calls "authorizing institutions of heritage" were born[11], while the institution with the greatest authority today is admittedly UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention. The Convention is the latest separate event in the institutionalization of 'heritage' and the global process of "cultural capitalization" (Kowalski forthcoming), and all subsequent agreements have taken place within its general confines. In what regards the concept of 'heritage', it is seen from the point of view of the Convention as "a material resource and a capital to be managed and augmented" (Kowalski forthcoming). The value system used in the convention is less connected to time; rather, for sites to be listed, they should be of "outstanding universal value" (Rakic 2007:210).

Scholars of World Heritage have produced critical assessments of the World Heritage Convention since the 1990's (Silverman 2010:5). These works generated such concepts as that of "dissonant heritage", conceived by Tunbridge and Ashworth, according to whom „all heritage is someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's" (cited by Silverman 2010:7). This view resembles Pressouyre's that „no absolute masterpiece … can pretend to be universally recognized" (1996:18). In general it can be said that the very definition of "value" of a site (as in the formulation "outstanding universal value") is found the most controversial among scholars (Silverman 2010:22). Related to it are the problematic effects of tourism, acknowledged by the heritage professionals themselves, who admit that "World Heritage, having been created for the purposes of conservation had eventually become more important for the purposes of tourism", emerging as a „brand", a „trademark" and an

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[10] Such early specialized national institutions are the 1807 *Danish Royal Commission for Antiquities*; the 1882 *Ancient Monuments Protection Act* of Britain, and a similar law in France in 1905; in 1904 the German *Heimatschutz* was enacted for the protection of both natural and built environment, and the US established its *National Park Service* in 1916 and the *Historic Sites Act* in 1935 (Walsh 1992:70–72).

[11] First the 1931 *Charter of Athens*, then the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (*Venice Charter*) of 1964 and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1965.

„authenticity stamp" (Rakic 2007:216). Tourist sites have instantaneously multiplied after the UNESCO convention was adopted, from 800 in 1960 to 2300 in 1983 (Urry 1990:5), and this is all due to a new quest for authenticity in places away from home, a phenomenon called by John Urry (1990) "the tourist gaze". Nevertheless, it is exactly the authenticity of a place which is destroyed by tourism, as Stuart Hall observed: "tourism distorts reality, obliging people to produce themselves for tourist consumption" (Boniface and Fowler 1993:5). This is undoubtedly the greatest concern of those who see mass tourism as a negative phenomenon, for the concept of authenticity has been at the core of the institutional concept of heritage since the Venice Charter (Smith L. 2006). Not only the local populations feel obliged to "produce themselves", but places need to do the same, supporting a practice of "place consumption" that bears the danger of exhausting them (Urry 1995). As Walsh observes, there is a clear sign of „surface-style inflation" in what regards heritage leisure: "as with nearly all modern forms of consumption, the emphasis during the 1980s and into the 1990s was on the manipulation of image" (1992:122), or the process of „engazement"—as Al-Sayyad refers to it—„through which the gaze transforms the material reality of the built environment into a cultural imaginary" (2001:4). The coalescence of World Heritage and the tourism industry has been viewed since the first scholarly explorations of the phenomenon up to the present day as following the logic of neoliberalism (Walsh 1992; Herzfeld 2010). As opposed to the institutional definition, heritage is seen as an ideology which contradicts the idea of a publicly held good (Walsh 1992:129). According to Herzfeld the "commoditization of history expands into urban design a classification that serves the goals of neoliberal modernity" (2010:s259). Although this is stated as a clear sign of the ideological drive of UNESCO, Kowalski (forthcoming) points out that the relationship between economic-political power and World Heritage is more complex than the functional explanations let to see.

In the institutional hegemonic discourse the individual and communal experience of heritage seems to have been forgotten. This latter meaning was captured during the initial phase of institutionalization under premodern legal systems. According to this view "a heritage is something we have possession of after the death of its original owners, and we are free to use as we choose" (Raban 1989, cited in Walsh 1992:68). This definition shows clear signs of its individualistic English common law origins, securely the law system with the closest links to social life and practice. Adopting this definition, of course, our entire built and natural habitat is part of one's heritage (and "not someone else's", would Tunbridge and Ashworth add). It would seem naïve to think of the rise in the number of World Heritage Sites as proof of the relativization of the concept and a shift towards its communal meaning. Even in a most decentralized political system the regional or national powers are the ones seeing themselves as the rightful owners of a heritage, rather than the ethnic population it often belongs to (Silverman 2010:28). Despite the fact that such academic propositions as "public outbreach" (Silverman 2010) have been voiced, it is doubtful that the two concepts of heritage could ever be reconciled. The tension becomes obvious if we look at cases where "world heritage" sites are being reclaimed as personal group heritage, such as in the case of the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Ruggles 2010; Schildgen 2008: 79–99) or in the Albayzín of Granada. The issue is not a new one, and one of its clearest expositions can be found in Herzfeld's (1991) study of Crete, where local people of a "Venetian" town had to deal with the bureaucracy surrounding the historic preservation of their town. In their case the ethnographer could clearly discern a divide between the "social time" (lived heritage) and "monumental time" (institutional heritage), and the struggle over the ownership of local history (cf. Silverman 2010:9).

The process of heritage creation is necessarily interrelated with gentrification phenomena in populated urban contexts. A later book by Michael Herzfeld (2009) sheds light exactly on

this uneasy relation by examining the case of Rome. My choice for Granada and its World Heritage neighborhood, the Albayzín, reflects the hope that this "uneasy relation", which I prefer to call 'heritagification', can be grasped in more detail in a smaller and more confined space. The concept of 'heritagification' has been used before regarding both intangible (Wienker-Piepho 2010) and material (Butler 2007) 'heritage' creation, but in my usage it will reflect a closer link with phenomena of urban physical renewal and population change. 'Heritagification' is the process in which gentrification is directed by globalized forces of cultural capitalization, involving a specific value system and having a direct impact on the constitution of the local population. The result is a different pattern of gentrification, depending heavily on the local context, and which has been described by Duque Calvache (2010b) as 'atomized' in the case of Albayzín.

# 2. ALBAYZÍN: A METHODOLOGICAL APPROXIMATION

## *2.1. Research site and terminology*

The Albayzín is a controversial neighborhood. Research has shown that on the one hand it is the most rejected and disliked neighborhood among the young population, but on the other hand its "noble" parts are where most people would like to live (Gutierrez and Bautista 2000). The high levels of rejection were considered paradoxical by the investigators, the reason given by them being that the medieval urban morphology and its askew character make it hard to be approached by car and the youngsters especially find it difficult to orientate themselves within the neighborhood (Gutierrez and Bautista 2000:270). Nevertheless, the romanticism of the place is still alive, and the local researchers conclude that "we, Granadans, prefer and/or fantasize about being able to live in the 'noble' parts of the idyllic neighborhood of Albayzín" (Gutierrez and Bautista 2000:275). The lower parts are dominated by elder and ruinous buildings, becoming attractive to the Moroccan immigrant community and the "new Muslims", contrasting thus the "new rich" and autochthonous population of the upper parts (Rosón 2008).

The denomination of the neighborhood is also contested. There are two spelling of its name appearing in print: *Albayzín* and *Albaicín*. They are both accepted forms, and it is a matter of taste and objective which of the two we adopt. According to Calvache (2010:115) the former is used if wishing to emphasize the elder days of the neighborhood, its Moorish past and exoticism (e.g. in UNESCO documents), while latter brigs out a more recent past of a catholic and working class neighborhood (e.g. local official documents). I chose to use the first spelling not to advocate a romanticized and constructed view of the place instead of a more realistic one, but to emphasize the existence of such imagery in relation to the question of 'heritage'.

The delimitation of Albayzín is likewise problematic. Basically, everything encompassed by the Gran Vía and the river Darro can be considered as part of the neighborhood (see Map 6 in Appendix). An institutional circumscription and internal division is presented on Map 7, and when referring to the place in general, this is what I will have in mind. The area of my fieldwork, however, was restricted to its core: from the Elvira street (sections 7-1, 5-1a and 4-2 on Map 7) along the Cuesta Alhacaba until San Salvador and Paseo de los Tristes, and back to the Plaza Nueva along the Darro.

Regarding the residents of the neighborhood in relation to gentrification, I will follow the classifications previously used by researchers. Calvache (2010:177–179) begins with the following scheme based on the latest statistical data:

*Figure 1.* **Representation of the gentrified space by Duque Calvache (2010:177)**
**Personal translation.**
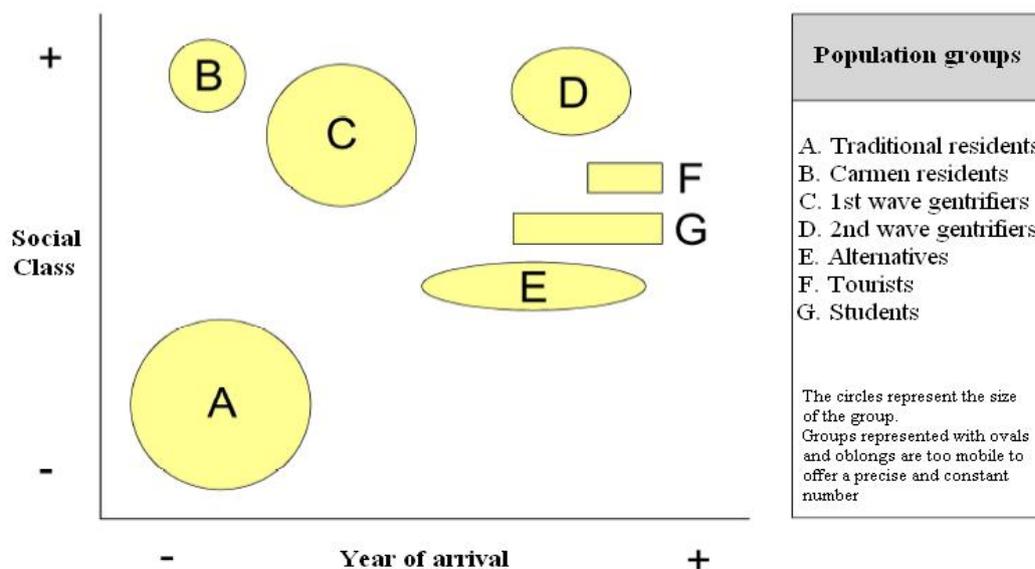


As *traditional residents,* are considered those whose families have lived there for generations, or those moving in during the postwar period. They share the same peasant- and working class status, and are now an aged group of mainly retirees.

*Cármen residents* are the upper class residents living in the 'noble' parts of the neighborhood (cf. Map 9), few in number and often using their *carmen* as a holiday/week-end

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house. The *cármen[12]* is a traditional Andalusian estate formed by a home and a series of gardens and orchards. They were the traditional dwellings of Moors and Moriscos, more open spaces at that time. Today they are surrounded by thick walls, isolating them from their surroundings, while inside they preserve a green habitat, being often referred to as "closed paradises" (Barrios Rozúa 2002). Another author calls the *cármen* a "small scale *vulgarization* of the Alhambra" (De Pablos and Cabrera Medina 2005:267).

*1st wave gentrifiers* bear the characteristics of the 'pioneers' of the classical gentrification studies. They have a cultural appreciation for the place and were willing to assume the risks of moving in to an ill-famed neighborhood. Many are employed by the local University, and their cultural capital is higher than the economic.

2nd wave gentrifiers in the case of Albayzín are not necessarily wealthier than the previous group (although many are), but they have assumed less risks, moving in after the neighborhood has acquired a positive image and investing in it was acknowledgedly profitable.

The group of *"alternatives and bohemians"* is a colorful one, comprising everyone from foreigners with high cultural capital to young squatters, all sharing a similar lifestyle. Many of them come from foreign countries and expose a romantic vision of the Albayzín.

The importance of *tourists* and *students* is acknowledged in the gentrification literature (Smith D. 2002, Evans 2002; Gotham 2005) and is essential in the case of Albayzín. Fernando Conde (1999) differentiates three "lived cities" in Granada: that of tourists, that of students and that of the local population. Javier Rosón, in his proposed scheme of the local gentrification, gives more attention to *tourists*, also introducing *immigrants* to the equation:

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[12] From the Andalusian Arab word *karm* (pl. *kurmát*) meaning 'vineyard'.

*Figure 2*. **Representation of the gentrified space by Javier Rosón (2008:292)**
**Personal translation.**
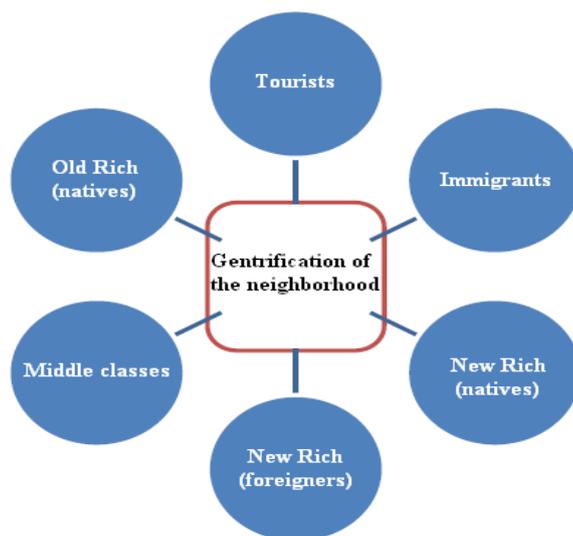


Rosón's scheme misses to differentiate between working- and upper class natives, and also lacks the temporal dimension. For this reason I will use Duque Calvache's terminology and classification, supplementing it with the category of *immigrants* (as different from the "rich" or "alternative" foreigners, and mostly North Africans).

## 2.2.    *The methods*

My investigation focuses on the institutional level of "heritagification" phenomena, considering six institutional actors to have a direct effect on the urban change in the neighborhood: the city council through the *Albaicín-Granada Foundation,* and the Government of Andalusia through the *Rehabilitation Office of Albaicín* represent the political institutional field; the civil institutional sphere represented by the residents' associations; the religious institutions; and finally the private sector of the real estate agencies. Other actors mainly influence the way institutions are taking positions regarding the past and desired future of Albayzín. While UNESCO provides the main ideology and surveillance over 'heritagification', tourists, students and immigrants have a direct daily effect on the neighborhood.

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*Figure 3*. **Personal representation of the gentrified space**
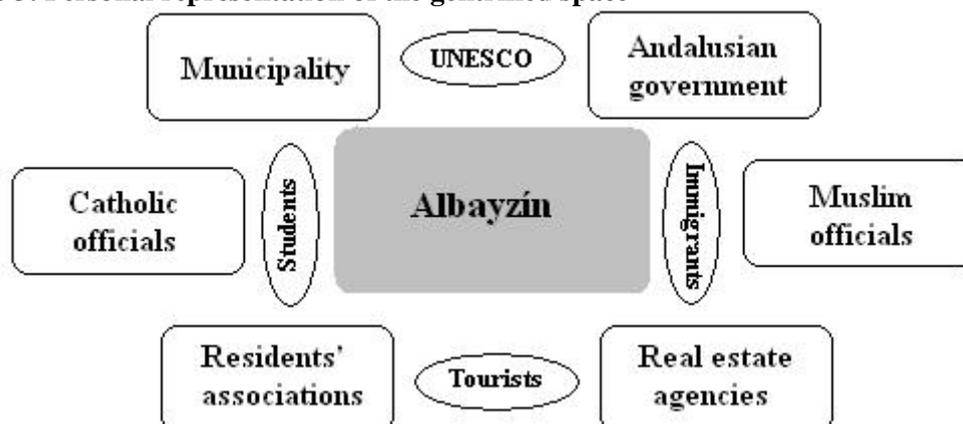


My research adopted mainly qualitative methods, during a fieldwork in April 2011. I conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with representatives of different institutions, and took notes from anther 9 unstructured conversations I have had with residents, immigrants and tourists. I have also analyzed press articles about Albayzín, available starting 2001 on the web-page of the *Lower Albayzín Residents' Association,* and those regarding the Muslim community starting 1997 on the WebIslam homepage. Finally, I have examined the situation of the physical heritage as documented in the *Special Plan of Interior Protection and Reform* (PEPRI 1990 and 2005).

In my thesis I will be referring to the following interviews, only citing the reference number in the text:

| I-1 | Technical director of the *Rehabilitation Office of Albaicín* |
|---|---|
| I-2 | Managing director of the *Albaicín-Granada Foundation* |
| I-3 | Secretary of *Lower Albayzín Residents' Association.* Female, 1st wave gentrifier. |
| I-4 | Treasurer of *Lower Albayzín Residents' Association.* Male, traditional resident |
| I-5 | Director of the Great Mosque of Granada |
| I-6 | Secretary of the Great Mosque of Granada |
| I-7 | Director of a real estate agency active in Albayzín since 1980 |
| I-8 | Pablo; traditional resident, 71 years, painter |
| I-9 | Carlos; traditional resident, 78 years, retired |
| I-10 | Maria; 1st wave gentrifier |
| G-1 | Weekly meeting of the *Lower Albayzín Residents' Association.* Group discussion. |

# 3. PASTS AND FUTURES OF URBAN LIFE IN THE ALBAYZÍN

The ups and downs experienced by Granada throughout its history are arguably some of the most radical among the cities studied by the classical gentrification literature. Unquestionably, the greatest transformation occurred at the beginning of the global age, and it played an important role in the creation of the new world order of the sixteenth century. However, the centuries of Christian-Castilian rule that followed the capitulation of Granada on January 2, 1492, are often seen as representing a long period of decay in the town's history (Harvey 2005; Isac 2007:31). This is exponentially true for the Albayzín, for which ever regaining its medieval vitality and population seems hardly achievable. Before the conquest the neighborhood (a town of its own) counted with approximately 14,000 houses, 30 mosques, and 40,000 inhabitants (Rosón 2010:119), while today, after several years of neighborhood revitalization, its population barely reaches 8,000 souls. As for its economy, until recently—as some of my older interviewees have confirmed—the neighborhood was partially rural and self-sufficient, although due to its artisanal production, it has always had a close relation with the Alhambra and "Granada"—as many residents still refer to the city center.[13] This discourse of isolation ('*aislamiento*') was also adopted by the newcomers; nevertheless, in the light of the latest socio-economic changes, it is now merely part of the "myth" of Albayzín (Cabrera 2009:239–240).

Although the conservative clerical nature of this initial social transformation would contribute to impeding the modernization of Spain in the long run, setting it on an awkward historical track as compared to other countries in the region until the second third of the 20th

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[13] The first Christian descriptions of the town after the conquest did not miss to mention that it is in fact composed of many (typically three) different 'cities'. Hieronymus Münzer identified in 1494 the royal quarter of Alhambra, the Antequerela (on the hillside right below the palace), the Albayzín, and the commercial center (the *medina*) as separate entities (Harris 2007:9).

century[14], the Spanish golden age initiated by it merely created an antagonism between the development of the Albayzín and the rest of the city. Seeing a great financial opportunity and backed by state incentives (allotment of land and empty Moorish homes), Castilians began populating the old Medina (the "lower town") and substantially expanding it, while feeling reluctant toward the Albayzín. This reluctance that led to the "confinement" of the neighborhood until the second half of the 20th century (Rosón 2010:120), was mainly due to the Moorish urban fabric, the "confusing maze of cramped and crooked streets, some so narrow that two donkeys could not pass" and the "labyrinthine and tiny [houses], one-fourth to one-fifth the size of those of the Castilians", although the running water impressed the newcomers (Harris 2007:9).[15] Notwithstanding, these 'pioneer' Castilian settlers—to remind of the uneasiness of the term in the Spanish context—required "new solutions of 'habitability', inasmuch as the 'city concept' meant opposite things to one and the other" (Rosón 2010:119–120).

The second great change in the town's urban history occurred in the second half of the 19th century with the late appearance of industrial activities (or rather, industrial agriculture, since industry per se only emerged in southern Spain very recently) and the formation of a 'reformist' bourgeoisie (Isac 2007).[16] The new class of industrialists and capitalists were lacking the fascination for the old—a characteristic of the "romantic city" (Isac 2007:31)— favoring modernist redevelopment. The grand-scale urban renovation and redevelopment of the city center only increased the isolation and depreciation of Albayzín, a devalorization process that will only change in the last decade of the 20th century. During the

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[14] The weakness of the Spanish Empire became visible with the French invasion of Spain (February-May 1808-1813), following which in only 90 years Spain lost all its colonies, the Spanish-American War of 1898 representing a national trauma which laid the ground for the civil war (1936-1939), ending with the rise of Francoism (1936-1975).

[15] Such and similar averse descriptions can be found in the writings of early travelers like the above-mentioned Münzer (1991), Andrea Navagero, or Baldassare Castiglione among others (cf. Hillgarth 2000:52 n. 168).

[16] Also at the end of the century would the town demographically regain the number of inhabitants it presumably had when it used to serve as capital of the Nazarí Kingdom (75,900 recorded at the 1900 census; cf. Isac 2007:34).

democratization of the country following the end of Franco's regime (1975), Spain became gradually integrated in the global neoliberal economy, and at the same time into the global quest for 'memory' and 'authenticity'. Places like Granada are successfully combining the economic with the 'memorial', and "the Albaicín performs a *catalytic role* for the city of Granada, of representing its past and present, inasmuch as it expresses the ability to project itself into the future, assuming the best of the inheritance received from its ancestors" (De Pablos and Cabrera Medina 2005:249).

I will explore both of these dimensions along this chapter, starting with the historical *devalorization* of the neighborhood and its subsequent *revalorization* through private initiatives and public programs, and continuing with its ability to "represent the past" and "project into the future", assuming that the tasks of representation and projection must be performed by people through discourse and action.

## 3.1. *A century of urban restructuring in Granada and Albayzín*

At the beginning of the 19th century French liberal bourgeois ideals began penetrating to the Spanish society and this became reflected in the urban preferences of the emerging industrial class. The reformist ideals of the Granadan bourgeoisie led to large-scale urban planning projects that would radically change the look of the town and give birth to the modern city we know today. These ideals were shaped by the needs of the bourgeoisie for modern amenities (water, street-lighting, markets, public transportation), and their preference for wide and straight boulevards like the ones built in Paris in the same period. These requirements were supported by the transformations in the local economy during the first stage of industrialization, and elaborate plans were designed and carried out in the second half of the century.

One of the most important political tools to advance the "embourgeoisement" were the disentailment policies implemented starting 1835, regarding primarily old religious buildings that could now be transformed and given other social uses. Between 1836 and 1874 there were some one thousand properties regained this way by the local authorities (Isac 2007:35). The technical and legal instruments aiding this early urban transformation were the *Regulation regarding Public Decoration* of 1847 (Reglamento de Ornato Público de 1847), the *Geometric Plan of José Contreras* (1853), and the *Alignment Project* (Proyecto de Alineación) (Isac 2007:36). The first disentailed properties became available in 1837, many of which were demolished to give space for marketplaces. Although the planning of markets had begun in 1850, until the 1880s there was no possibility to comply with the hygiene requirements of the same ideal requiring a steady supply of consumables. The issue of street-lighting was solved in 1859 with the implementation of gas lighting and the construction in 1863 of the gas factory on the banks of the river Genil. In 1866, another modern structure, the train station was inaugurated in the northern part of the city. Although an acute economic crisis detained the actual development of the projects until the end of the century, with the introduction of sugar beet cultivation and the appearance of the first sugar factories around the city, enough private capital is created for the most ambitious redevelopment plans to be performed (Isac 2007).

While during the 1880s many smaller structures have been demolished or given new use (see Map 3 in Appendix), what followed in the 1890s is a genuine "haussmannization" of the city center (see Map 4). The geometrical ideal of José Contreras was never achieved in its totality, only in the rectangular shape and symmetric plan of the newly build gardens and plazas. The new plans, however, had much more practical concerns. One was the need to connect the city center with the railway station, and the surrounding sugar factories. The major private corporation involved in the redevelopments was the *Granadan Reformer* (La

Reformadora Granadina), an anonymous society constituted in 1895 and comprising sugar industrialists, bankers and local merchants (Isac 2007:81). The society proposed several solutions, and finally the construction of the Grand Vía was approved and works started in 1895, to be finalized in 1903 (see Map 4). The boulevard represents the greatest redevelopment project up to our time, having totally changed the functions of the central city. It was meant to give appropriate housing solutions for the wealthiest class, easy access to the railway station by tram, and a modern esthetic. To achieving this, however, the historical heritage of the city centre—the old Medina of the Arab town—was entirely destroyed. The project was opposed in vain by conservationists like Torres Balbás—to whom we owe the present looks of the Alhambra and the Gardens of Generalife—who characterized the new structure with these words:

> The Grand Vía de Colón is an 822 meters long and 20 meters wide straight street, connecting the Reyes Católicos with the Triunfo; it is today an ugly modern street without perspective or character whatsoever, tiresome to walk, on which the only thing catching our attention is the sight of a proud cypress left on one of the sidewalks as a reminder of the convent of Santa Paula (Torres Balbás 1923:311).

The second great project of the 19th century was the vaulting of the river Darro. As the river separating the Albayzín from the hill of the Alhambra and cutting through the lower town of the old medina, the Darro was essential for the artisans who could easily dispose of their waste into the river. It was also part of the romantic vision of the town (Isac 2007:71). For the modernist urban reformers, on the other hand, it only represented the main cause for the devalorization of the central city, and its dissembling began around 1854. A small portion of the river had been vaulted since the 16th century after the extension of the Plaza Nueva

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(compare Map 1 and Map 2), and starting the works from the other end, the entire river up till the Plaza Nueva would be covered by the end of the century (see Map 4 and 5). The street erected on top of the river was given the name Reyes Católicos (Catholic Monarchs) in the memory of Ferdinand and Isabella, the conquerors of the city. With this, the uncomfortable natural barrier in the middle of the new financial and commercial center was eliminated, and the new bourgeois city was born with the urban fabric familiar to present day Granadans and visitors (see Map 6).

As we can see on the maps (see Appendix), all these urban reforms have merely reached the outskirts of Albayzín. Moreover, the strict separation of Albayzín from the 'worthy' parts of the city was de facto established by the Gran Vía (compare Maps 5 and 6; what was still the picture of a monolithic town in the former, resembles more of a city rent asunder today). Not even one project was thought of in order to change altogether the 'romantic' aspect of the neighborhood, an urban ideal despised by the reformers. As Angel Isac (2007:80) observes, The *Granadan Reformer* was "a company with great real-estate objectives", and although the magnitude of the projects finally led the society to bankruptcy, their inversion of capital in infrastructure and high-rent housing was aiming for considerable revenues. The redevelopment of the lower city had also caused the devalorization and loss of functions in adjacent neighborhoods, like the Albayzín, calling for similar reform operations (Isac 2007:86). The construction of the Gran Vía, however, remains the greatest private investment in the urban history of the city, ensuing developments being led mostly by the municipality or other official authorities. The mayoralty of Antonio Gallego Burín between 1938 and 1951 is an interesting case. It represents a certain change in perspective, advocating the "transformation of the city without forgetting what it meant in the History, what it is, and what could represent in the future" (cited in Isac 2007:121), while bringing about one of the most important works of redevelopment in Manigua, a decaying neighborhood besides the

City Hall, renowned until then for its prostitution houses (Duque Calvache 2010b)—today street Ángel Ganivet, tailing into Reyes Católicos and the Puerta Real square; see Map 6.

It is difficult to assess the 'proto-gentrification' of lower-city Granada in economic terms, applying the devalorization theory leading to the creation of rent gaps (Smith N. 1979, 1996). This early redevelopment of the city center represents an initial valorization (capital investment) in both "the means of reproduction" and "the means of circulation" (Smith N. 1996:80). Since its creation the 'bourgeois city' has always provided housing, services and jobs for the upper middle classes. The Gran Vía and the Reyes Católicos still present the picture of a stagnant gentrifications frontier, and their construction involved a significant displacement, many low-income previous dwellers moving to Albayzín (Duque Calvache 2010b:397–398). This further intensified the stigmatization of the neighborhood, the aversion to the urban fabric being complemented with a social stigma. Although it is located in the proximity of the financial center, the fact of lying on a hill and maintaining its crooked streets disqualified it from being considered a good investment.

While an expected devalorization of the central area never occurred, the Albayzín has been constantly devalorizing since the 16th century, after the loss of its traditional functions. Although it has completely rebuilt itself since the conquest, there was no directed investment in the neighborhood, and for this reason I preferred to talk about an 'historical devalorization'. What we have is a specific case of an extremely long historical devalorization process, caused by colliding and untraversable value systems, leading to a loss of functional value. What eventually led to a rent gap (or rather an 'historical value gap', not to be confused with Hamnett and Randolph's (1986) 'value gap', latter reflecting a 'price gap' more accurately, cf. Lees et al. 2008) was induced by the emergence of a global 'historical value' as described in Chapter 1. This change was unpredictable at least until the end of the 19th century, but since then it could be approximated based on the structure's 'age value' (age) (cf. Alois Riegl

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[1903] 1982). Paradoxically, disinvestment turned out to be beneficial on its own by not having interfered with the authenticity of the historical structure, and a 'purposive reinvestment'—having to support first and foremost the 'historical value' of the place—started being perceived first as a sound financial investment and later as an obligation. At this point buildings became reclassified as historical landmarks which increased their potential value and 'potential ground rent' (a value which is the result of speculation on the basis of the historical value of the historic structure). We could visualize this process in a very rudimentary and simplistic manner as in *Figure 4*. I did not differentiate between land and property value, neither between historical and commemorative value, and examining in more depth any characteristic of the value system involved would go beyond the aims of present thesis.

*Figure 4*: **Sketch of the historical devalorization process of the Albayzín. Personal elaboration**
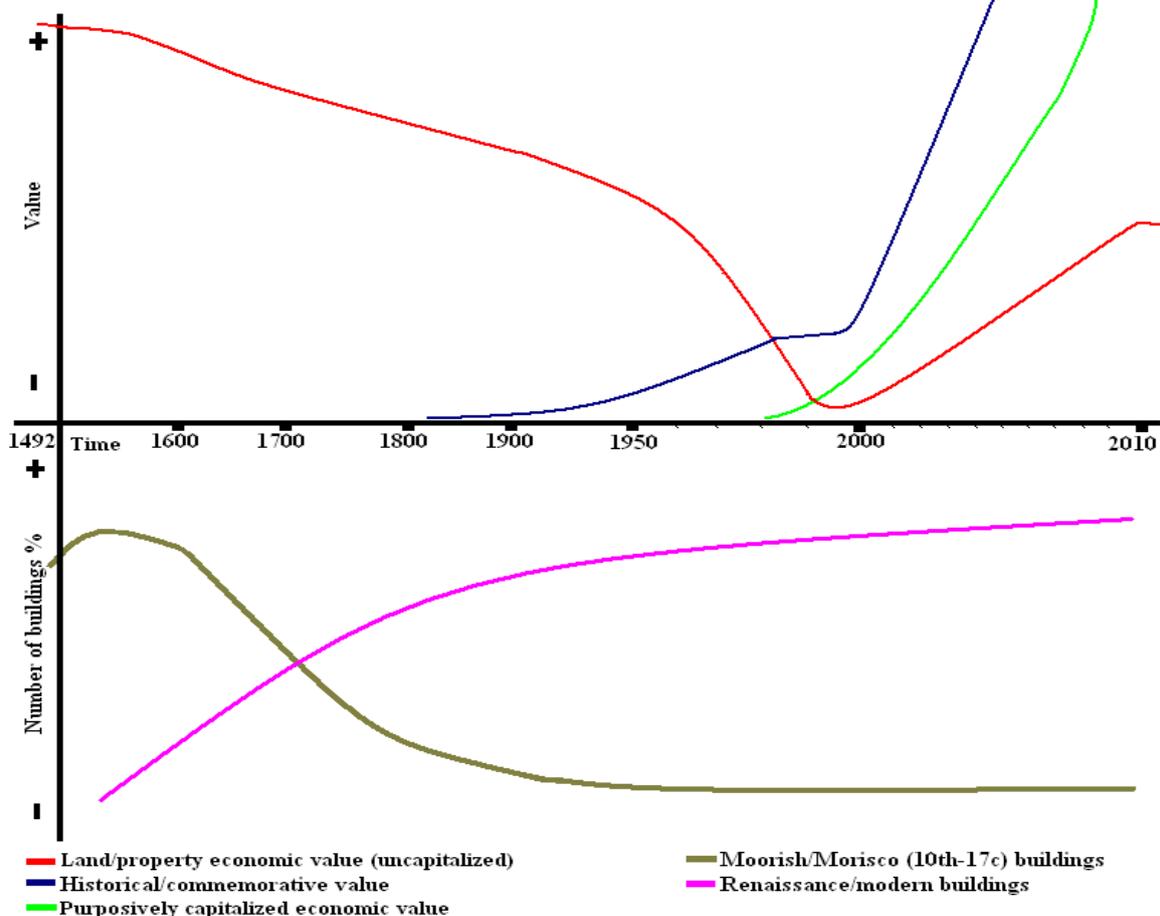
The aim of the above diagram is to present a general "trend" of historical devalorization, the same way as 'gap' theories are usually perceived (Lees et al. 2008:67). It needs to be noted that the historical/commemorative value has an economic component on its own due to place-consumption phenomena like tourism (Urry 1995), while the "uncapitalized land/property value" is pervaded by a speculative idealism when overestimating the worth of a property, leading to the stagnation of the real-estate market (the decline that I have signaled on the chart at the end of the 2000s is due to this realization and the economic crisis). The hidden feature of the "purposively capitalized economic value" is that it works against the historical value of a structure, up to the point of outrunning it. 'Touristification' can overwhelm a neighborhood with a specific consumption function, and as John Urry adverts, "places can be literally consumed; what people take to be significant about a place (industry, history, buildings, literature, environment) is over time depleted, devoured or exhausted by use" (1995:1–2).

The first signs of the emergence of a 'historical value' in Spain date back to the *Royal Decree of June 1, 1900,* which requested the drawing up of a *Monument and artistic Catalogue* (*Catálogo monumental y artistico*). After 1905 a series of laws and decrees have been enacted, ending with the *Spanish Historical Heritage Law* of 1985 (Ley del Patrimonio Histórico Español), adopted some months after the first World Heritage Site designations—including to the Alhambra—were assigned in Spain (Castelló Nicás 2003:118–119). These early measures correspond to those in other European countries in the first stage of national institutionalization of 'heritage', as discussed in Chapter 1 (see n. **10**). Backed up by these national laws, Granada was declared *Artistic City* in 1929, and a local Artistic Center was encharged with delimiting the 'artistic zone' of Albayzín. Unfortunately, as a contemporary article relates, "the work, begun with such keen enthusiasm, remained unfinished, and the report requested by the General Office of Fine Arts, which should have laid the bases for the

appropriate measures to guarantee the conservation of the Albayzín, was never issued" (*Ideal*, February 27, 1936; quoted in Castelló Nicás 2003:120). However, a different initiative succeeded in soliciting the declaration of a few remaining Moorish/Morisco structures as *Architectural-artistic Monuments*, such as the old walls of the Alcazaba and of the Rabad al-Bayyazín, the Morisco house on street Horno de Oro no. 14, the Arab bath (*el Bañuelo*) and the House of Chapiz (*Casa del Chapiz*) (see Map 1 and 6), all this between 1918 and 1922. Besides Moorish structures some old Christian churches were also catalogued, and another decree in 1931 extended this list with new edifices to be conserved.

Simultaneously with the dispersed instances of "proto-heritagification" (too scant and anemic to produce massive changes in the demography and economy of the neighborhood, as opposed to 'real' heritagification), the modernizing planning adopted in the city center started filtering into the Albayzín, with several street alignment projects being undertaken, most notably for us, the creation of San Nicolás square in 1913, today the most visited viewpoint unto the Alhambra, and next to which the Great Mosque was built. During the thirties, a period of great political unrest and civil war, the struggle between the conservationist and modernist visions was still undecided, yet with the eclectic urban policy of the abovementioned mayor Gallego Burín, the Albayzín seemed to become a domain of the former. As Castelló Nicás observes, "contrary to the reformist spirit that Gallego Burín had tried to imprint on the city's urbanism, in the Albaicín his intention was always to conserve and perpetuate the urban environment of the neighborhood, trying to maintain its «popular, clear and natural shade»" (2003:136). His plans aimed toward the infrastructural improvement and sanitation of the historic neighborhood, both in a deplorable state. The mayor announces his Reform Plan of 1942 in the local newspaper, stating that as the reform of the central city is almost concluded, the City Hall's efforts shall turn to the Albayzín and two other neighborhoods, thus "closing the project of total transformation [sic] of the town" (Castelló

Nicás 2003:137). During the forties many improvements are being conducted, especially in the paving of the streets. The mayor's vision achieves legal status with adoption of the *Alignment Plan of 1951*, although with the end of Burín's mayoralty that same year, the projects stop. The following decades are characterized by land speculations, and "the speculation and the policy of development at all costs of these years will not have a place in a neighborhood whose historic and artistic value has priority over the interests of private promoters" (Castelló Nicás 2003:151). A new plan of integral reform of the neighborhood will only be issued in the 1970s, as a result of professionals' and citizens' demands, although it will mainly continue the expansionist policies, planning thirteen further housing developments in the north and north-east parts of the city. The post-1951 urban expansionism has also contributed to the depopulation of the Albayzín, while perpetuating the conservative middle class character of the city center. This is due to the fact that suburbanization was not aiming the middle class population but the working classes, offering small and cheap block apartments with modern amenities that were lacking in the Albayzín. Between 1970 and 1990 the neighborhood lost more than half of its population, being the percentage of children and teenagers that the most had diminished (see Table 1).

*Table 1*. **Evolution of the population of Albayzín.**

| | 1970 | | 1987 | | 1991 | | 2000 | | 2010 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | **N** | **%** | **N** | **%** | **N** | **%** | **N** | **%** | **N** | **%** |
| **0-19** | 9156 | 39.1 | 3216 | 27.1 | 2602 | 24.9 | 1533 | 17.0 | 1291 | 16.0 |
| **20-34** | 4270 | 18.3 | 2765 | 23.5 | 2622 | 25.1 | 2397 | 26.7 | 1978 | 24.4 |
| **35-54** | 5257 | 22.5 | 2311 | 19.6 | 1974 | 19.0 | 2287 | 25.5 | 2784 | 34.3 |
| **55-74** | 3451 | 14.7 | 2633 | 22.3 | 2456 | 23.4 | 1905 | 21.1 | 1365 | 16.8 |
| **>75** | 1261 | 5.4 | 885 | 7.5 | 794 | 7.6 | 875 | 9.7 | 691 | 8.5 |
| **Total** | **23395** | **100** | **11810** | **100** | **10448** | **100** | **8997** | **100** | **8109** | **100** |

**Sources: Cabrera Medina 2009:155 and Padrón Municipal de Habitantes 2011 (www.ine.es). Personal elaboration.**

Additionally to the policy-led urban depreciation, natural phenomena like the earthquake of 1956 or the 1963 floods have also contributed to the state of disrepair and abandonment

which begged for the *Albaicín Special Plan* of 1975. This plan, nevertheless, did not have any effect in the following years. Between 1975 and 1979-81 Spain was going through a transition to democracy after the death of Francisco Franco, and after the 1979 local elections a totally new world of opportunities opened up.

The first stable mayor of the democratic regime, Antonio Jara Andreu, approached these new possibilities by requesting the inclusion of Granada's historical center on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The preparation works lasted for several years and finally in 1984 the palace of Alhambra and the surrounding gardens of Generalife were given world heritage title. The application of Albayzín was rejected and further works were suggested for its reconsideration, a decision which disillusioned many of the local experts and the population. The following year two important decisions are taken which came to represent the unification of the heritage conservation and the city planning regulations that have often opposed each other in the past; one is the *Spanish Historical Heritage Law* and the other the *General Urban Plan of Granada* (Plan General de Ordenación Urbana de Granada; PGOU85). The PGOU was to be followed up by Special Plans for each neighborhood, the first such *Special Plan of Interior Protection and Reform* (Plan Especial de Protection y Reforma Interior; PEPRI) being that of Alhambra (1989), followed by Albayzín (1990), Vega (1990), the riversides of Genil, Darro and Beiro (1992), and a decade later that of the center. The PEPRI (1990, 2001 and the latest of 2005), together with several other partial plans, is the urban policy framework on which the gentrification and heritagification phenomena are being played out in the Albayzín. Whether it promotes gentrification or regulates the negative effects gentrification might bring about is up for debate, and we will meet some of the contrasting opinions in the following sections of the thesis.

***Picture 1a:*** **'For sale' billboard in front of San Nicolás in 2003.** Source: Avilés 2009.



***Picture 1b***: **Photo of Albayzín from the Alhambra. Notice the bulk of tourists on San Nicolás square, in front of the church.** Photo by the author.

It is certain, though, that phenomena relating to gentrification have been experienced before the planned renovation of the neighborhood. Duque Calvache (2010b:399) considers the earthquake of 1956 to have initialized the process, and some of the life-stories I have collected confirm this viewpoint (I-8 and I-9). Later, after the proclamation of the Alhambra as World Heritage Site, properties with a direct view onto it have experienced an instantaneous appreciation, for it was the 'sight' of the palace that was on the market for a very good price (cf. Avilés 2009; see *Picture 1*).

The neighborhood was finally granted World Heritage status in 1994, under the first Spanish UNESCO presidency of Federico Mayor Zaragoza (1987-1999). This triggered a

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more direct gentrification due to the effects that the prospective international funds would have on the improvement of the neighborhood and the economic value of the houses. The World Heritage status of the Albayzin became questionable, however, in 1996 when Zaragoza threatened with the withdrawal of the designation if no serious rehabilitation would be done in the short future (cf. Cabrera Medina 2009:175). This admonition led to the intensification of the renovation works and the implementation of several short-term plans combining European and governmental funds (two important ones were the *Urban Pilot Project* in 1997 and the *Elvira-Gomérez Axis* in 1998). These projects were successfully carried out within 4-5 years with a total budget of 21,241,140 Euros of which 9,644,697 came from European funds (Castelló Nicás 2003:192).

## *3.2. Heritage and revitalization*

Becoming a World Heritage Site contributed to the consolidation of the 'myth' of Albayzín, since it was now institutionally proclaimed. For UNESCO, "much of the significance of the Albayzín lies in the medieval town plan with its narrow streets and small squares and in the relatively modest houses in Moorish and Andalusian style that line them" (ICOMOS 1994). Regarding the Christian conquest, the same body of experts deems, in a rather 'tempocentric' (cf. Hobson 2002) fashion, that "the new proprietors and their foremen must have been so dazzled by the beauty and coherence of this urban ensemble that they did not disfigure it", while, as we have seen, it was rather their aversion that kept it intact. The same document, arguing for the extension of the 1984 designation asserts that the Albayzín "should not be considered as a buffer zone to the Alhambra and the Generalife because it has a universal value which is complementary to and chronologically earlier than the site already on the List", alluding to the remainders of the 11th c. Zirid wall.

The buildings found in the neighborhood are much newer, however, than the common belief and the tourist traps would suggest. There are two types of protected edifices in the neighborhood, making up almost its entire building-stock. On the one hand we can find a restricted number of "buildings of architectural or artistic value" and on the other a much larger sample of "popular architecture" (Cabrera Medina 2009:172). In *Table 2* we can see the age of the buildings as distributed in the different sectors created by PEPRI (cf. Map 7).

*Table 2*. **Number of buildings in the Albayzin according to age and location.**

| PEPRI Sector | | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | Total catalogued |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Architectural or Artistic value** | | | | | | | | |
| **Built** | **Before 1800** | 0 | 1 | 60 | 49 | 8 | 43 | 161 |
| | **19th-20th c.** | 2 | 9 | 47 | 32 | 29 | 42 | 161 |
| **Total catalogued** | | **2** | **10** | **107** | **81** | **37** | **85** | **322** |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Popular architecture** | | | | | | | | |
| **Built** | **Before 1750** | 0 | 2 | 80 | 44 | 25 | 107 | 258 |
| | **1750-1920** | 10 | 16 | 143 | 178 | 92 | 222 | 662 |
| | **After 1920** | 2 | 83 | 133 | 208 | 63 | 767 | 1257 |
| **Total catalogued** | | **12** | **101** | **356** | **430** | **180** | **1096** | **2177** |
| **Total no. of buildings in Albayzín** | | **14** | **115** | **474** | **524** | **226** | **1196** | **2549** |

**Sources: Cabrera Medina 2009:172 and Ayuntamiento 1990. Personal elaboration.**

The same number of protected, architecturally or artistically valuable buildings have been built in the 19th and 20th centuries as before, the majority of the older structures being renaissance and religious constructions. As for the 'popular architecture', or homes, half of the existing 2549 buildings in the Albayzín were built after 1920, which makes them modern structures, although they present Moorish and Andalusian stylistic elements. This is not to

disparage the more than one thousand old buildings, among which there are several Moorish/Morisco constructions, but to direct attention to the generally renaissance origin of the urban heritage in the neighborhood. The spirit of heritagification, nevertheless, seems to favor older Moorish architectural and artistic appearances (see Picture 2).



Picture 2: Modern Arabic and arabesque style inscriptions and shapes. Photo by the author.

The dispersion of the artistic monuments and buildings can be seen on Map 8 (Appendix). The majority of the monuments and old popular houses are to be found in lower Albayzín, close to the Calle Elvira and the center, or next to the river Darro and the Plaza Nueva, the most depreciated and abandoned parts of the neighborhood.

The renovation of the buildings has been more or less successful, with yet much to be done, and often contested by the residents. But the renewal of the urban space needs to be met with a social planning aiming to promote the life in the neighborhood. As Hita Alonso (1996) observed, the aim of 'rehabilitating' a historical neighborhood has shifted in both discourse and practice toward 'revitalization', denoting a more dynamic process. The verdict is that "the Albayzín is a neighborhood destined to be inhabited" (De Pablos and Cabrera Medina 2005:267). This is formally acknowledged by both the *Rehabilitation Office of Albaicín*

(Rehabilitation Office; since 2002, Government of Andalusia) and the *Albaicín-Granada Foundation* (Foundation; since 1998, City Council of Granada), the two institutions in charge of implementing the rehabilitation projects and supervising the preservation of heritage accordingly. The Foundation had managed the EU funded renovations of the 1990s and early 2000s, today being the main local supervisory organ to safeguard the neighborhood's patrimony and to develop the Tourist Plan of Granada. The Rehabilitation Office has been managing the renovation works since 2002, extending its mission from lower Albayzín to the entire neighborhood. Not long before my fieldwork, it moved its headquarters from the city center to a newly renovated building on the Calderería—the famous street where the souvenir shops of North-African immigrants are concentrated—this way getting physically closer to the neighborhood. According to the Rehabilitation Office, their main aim is to "stabilize the population" (I-1):

> But what have I told you earlier? That our main objective is to fix the population, to stabilize it, including attracting new residents. And this other operation is the exact contrary: the expulsion of the residents and the creation of a building that would serve as a hotel, student accommodation, or for people who come for the week-ends… And this happens very often unfortunately. I find it good to have housing for tourists, but when everything becomes that, than we can no longer speak of a neighborhood, right? … But when people receive our help, they have to guarantee that for a certain time they maintain the old tenants, who will pay a low rent, a protected rent [*renta protegida*] (I-1).

The "other operation" which the director of the Office was referring to is the private investment into old buildings and their conversion for economic purposes. People asking for subsidies need also to invest their own money into the rehabilitation, and this usually requires

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a minimum commitment of 30% of the entire costs. The Rehabilitation Office discerns between small intervention and grander scale conversions, the latter being usually financed with a major contribution from the side of the owner. Some invest 200 thousand, 300 thousand Euros, but there are owners who put in 600 thousand or even up to two million Euros. As this requires a huge financial effort, one can reach the conclusion that the rehabilitation subsidies are only available to the rich.

> No, they aren't necessarily rich, almost everyone has a mortgage, and the typical is that one inherits the house from his parents who bought it decades ago after working abroad. And these people are offered our help, which I am telling you, is much more than just money; for the owners is even more important that we take care of all the paperwork which would be very complicated and time-consuming for them… But there are many who are in such a bad financial situation that cannot even receive a bank loan; and what happens is that they have to sell. And whoever buys it, of course, won't come to us to ask for subsidies, because they can take care of the renovation themselves. They usually have different intentions, to open a hotel for example, which is very typical of the past couple of years (I-1).

As we can see the officials have a clear knowledge of gentrification, and the policies regulating the rehabilitation are purposefully directed to combat it. There are 600 houses that have already been renovated, and according to the project director, the social stabilization of the neighborhood is already noticeable (I-1). By "protecting the rent", the government wishes on the one hand to keep local residents in the neighborhood, and on the other, to keep the Albayzín a diverse and intercultural space, as it has always been. The first low-rent apartments have been leased in 2007 to youngsters and immigrants, for a monthly rent between 71 and 125 Euros. The government also wishes to attract small businesses and

professionals who provide services that would keep the families in the neighborhood. At present, the lack of infrastructure, shops, parking and other amenities makes it very difficult for a young couple to raise a child in Albayzín, and the number of children is dramatically low. For this purpose a regulation has been drafted on March 20, 2007, to assist the settlement of professionals and small businesses with less than 5 employees and an annual turnover under 1 million Euros.

The diversity is not only present among tenants, but also among the owners. A typical case could be that of an apartment house rehabilitated in January 2011. The house in question is a 17th century Morisco building owned by a Japanese citizen who provided 70% of the rehabilitation costs. The apartments were sublet on a protected price of 200 Euros, and the owner also plans to open a flamenco workshop and a crafts shop on the ground floor.

Although the achievements of these projects are publicized in the local newspapers, residents often contest the way they are being carried out. The *Lower Albayzín Residents' Association* is "very critical of both the municipality and the government" (I-3), emphasizing that it is not a matter of political affiliation, since the two entities represent different political parties.[17] The Foundation functions under the auspices of the city council, and has a somewhat different opinion on the issue of tourism than the Rehabilitation Office. The Foundation is responsible for renovating and maintaining the historic monuments, and with the elaboration of the Tourist Plan of Granada.

> … We must facilitate, not impose but facilitate the hotels. I defend the case of hotels, with the condition that they be required some rules of external projection, like… for example, we have down here on the Carrera del Darro a small hotel called El Ladrón de Agua. Now, the owner is an exquisite businessman, and sets up exhibitions every two or

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[17] It is interesting to note that the first PEPRI Alhambra of 1989 was the result of a confrontation between the two, after the Government opposed a construction work in the Alhambra district, promoted by the City Council.

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CEU eTD Collection

three months with the works of another painter, sculptor or whatever…and many people enter just to see that; I always do when I pass by and there is something new… So, for example if you request from someone who wants to open a hotel to do something like this, then I think we would all win… And the city council can impose this when giving out authorizations… And of course, a hotel should always be in an old, renovated house, keeping everything as it was; I am not advocating new build hotels; that, I don't… (I-2).

The importance of attracting small businesses which bring life to the neighborhood is acknowledged by both institutions, although the Rehabilitation Office is more inclined to the view shared by residents, that the neighborhood is slowly turning into a "thematic park" (I-3 and I-4). Nevertheless, the office is itself criticized for the way funds are distributed: "you can only have access to those funds if you are rich. If you cannot add your share, you get nothing! And, obviously, the rich are also their friends" (I-3). The opinion that you need to be "a friend" was shared by almost all of my interviewees, many having renovated their homes without any financial help (I-4, I-8, I-9).



Picture 3a (upper left): „We are tired of so many speculators"

Picture 3b (upper right): „City Hall and Government collaborating on the expulsion of the residents of Albayzín"

Picture 3c: (lower left): „Stop the real estate plague. The Albaycín is not for sale"

Photos by the author

While the Residents' Association is only "critical" toward the political actors, the "anti-speculation" groups of the younger tenants are much more bellicose. Those associated are usually higher income traditional residents or first wave gentrifiers, owners of their homes and not directly threatened by dislocation. The poorer population of tenants, however, is more vulnerable and more concerned with what gentrification might bring about. Many signs of this concern can be read off the walls of Albayzín (see pictures 3a, b and c).

A hallmark event of the anti-gentrification struggle was the act of protest performed on April 17, 2009. On that day, a group of residents (around fifty persons) surrounded the Rehabilitation Office (at the time located in the center, not far from the city hall) and some entered the institution to request that a fax be sent from the Office to certain institutions (including UNESCO) with their letter of protest. The text distributed by the protesters included the following:

> Both the Government of Andalusia and the City Council are chattering about their politics regarding the rehabilitation of Albayzín and, above all, about their objective of keeping the current residents in the neighborhood. The truth is that the Government of Andalusia and the City Council have endeavored to destroy the popular character of the traditional neighborhood of Granada, transforming it into a tourism business.
>
> After the declaration of the neighborhood as World Heritage in 1994, an enormous amount of money has been injected by the European Union into its rehabilitation. These funds, managed by the public administrations, have served as advertisement to attract real estate agencies and big owners who, after buying buildings in the neighborhood are taking advantage of these funds to destroy them and build new ones resembling the old, transforming it [the Albayzín] into a thematic park [sic], with new houses and richer residents, where the old residents with lower incomes have no place (Alasbaricadas 2009).

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A clear picture of an advanced gentrification process emerges from this text, and the discourse of the residents is directly opposed to that of the administrative institutions. For example, it was exactly the existence of an "enormous amount of money" which was being denied by the institutions:

> … No, this is the problem! You are proclaimed World Heritage, and then the government thinks that everything is saved, you are very well off on your own. But the UNESCO does not give money; it is a minimum that they give (I-2).

The 2009 protest was triggered by a case which is considered representative by those incriminating the administration and the private sector:

> The owners … are refusing to do the maintenance and rehabilitation works on the building, in hope that the current tenants will get tired and move out on their own, and this way the rehabilitation business becomes excellent (Alasbaricadas 2009).

The aim of the residents was to achieve the expropriation of the building for reasons of neglect, but this was denied by the authorities, saying that "since the residents have done some repairs, the City Council cannot expropriate the building; but this view contradicts what other experts from the same institution are saying" (Alasbaricadas 2009).

The above events coincided with the fall of the real estate market. According to a real estate agent:

> Ten years ago everything was different; my firm was among the few who dealt with the neighborhood, it was seen like a joke by the big agencies, something like a slum… who

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would want to live here? And then in 98-99 you had some very low prices; not as low as before, but available for a young couple with medium incomes. It was after 2000 that prices started going up, and this is also the fault of the big agencies that suddenly grew an interest in the neighborhood. And in 2005 everything was already so expensive that an average family could not afford it… it was sold to foreigners mostly… But, you see, this cannot go on forever! In 2007 the highest prices were already achieved, we knew that this is the end, it's over; but the people did not realize it at that point, and even one or two years after. Whoever bought to resell now had an empty property and the frozen market … And then with the crisis… It's all over now, I'm telling you. What you see here, these prices are not real; it's a desire, a dream, they cannot sell, they can only lose money now… or put it in their will! (I-7).

The past three years are an example of the "speculative idealism" described earlier. It would be difficult to assess the implication of the local administration in this process, since there are clear examples supporting their discourse on the strife to provide "protected rents". Moreover, this was exactly what one resident, a first wave gentrifier, condemned:

It's true; they lease some apartments on protected rent, just to put it in the paper. But what do they do in this case? They give it out to immigrants or young delinquents who just came out from prison, to young solitary mothers, to people with problems. They say that they are helping those who are the most vulnerable in the society, and we agree that they need to be helped and supported… But what they do, they do it with a purpose; I don't know what it is, perhaps to scare those who still didn't sell, but they have something in mind. Because the neighborhood is becoming more dangerous, and the solitary mothers… well, don't tell me this is the best place to raise a child alone… if you call an ambulance, you can wait for it for hours, you can't drive… don't tell me (I-10).

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The issue of who should populate the neighborhood is part of the different visions people have on the future of Albayzín. The Albaicín Foundation seems to favor the commercial opportunities offered by the UNESCO designation, adopting a more economist perspective, also shared by the real estate agents. They see the present and future of the neighborhood to be dependent on two things:

> There is the Alhambra, and the University. Without these two Granada would be a small country town without industry, seaside, jobs or anything. I would disappear. If we wouldn't have the tourists and the students, Granada would disappear! (I-7)

The Andalusian Government, on the other hand, being run by the socialists (PSOE) and having to oppose the right-wing politics of the City Council, favors combining professionals and small family businesses, and afflicted population in need of cheap housing. At the same time this latter aim is seen merely as a scam by many residents. First-wave gentrifiers, those moving in until 2000-2003 and usually selling their other properties to buy their house, see a conspiracy in what the administrative institutions are doing, and reject in part both the ingoing poor and the second-wave gentrifiers, those who bought their property as an investment, to give it commercial functions, and who most often don't move to the neighborhood. Some other tensions will be examined in the following section.

## 3.3. Inheritance and Islamization

When entering Albayzín, visitors are confronted with the multitude of shops selling souvenirs and goods that could be described as 'orientalia'. Along the Calle de Elvira and especially around the triangle formed by the streets Calderería Vieja and Calderería Nueva (New- and Old Braziers' Street) (see Map 6), there are tens of these shops owned and ran by

North-African immigrants. The products, manufactured in Morocco, and the vendors provide an oriental atmosphere acting upon all five of our senses. The importance of this symbolic gate to an imagined temporal and geographical distance can be assessed based on a short conversation I had with an American visitor:

> Well, initially we were planning on going to Morocco, although it was kind of conflicting with our schedule… but then we decided to come to Granada instead, cause here you can get almost the same thing, but you don't need the visa and all…

Although the residents have accepted the presence of the shops and their owners, they do not fail to mention a few things:

> We don't have anything against them, it is everyone's right to live and make a living wherever they want. But, there are some things that need to be learnt, to behave… because every country has its own rules, and in Spain we usually keep our merchandize inside the shop… but they put it out on the street, as you could see, and these streets are much narrower than a normal street; if you also take your merchandize out there, then no one can pass… It is terrible when you have to go to the city, and you need to squeeze… And that the vendors are also out there all day, sitting on their small chairs with their legs outstretched, and wouldn't move an inch if you wanted to pass… (I-10)

The presence of the merchandize and the vendors on the street also enhances their visibility, increasing the perceived number of North African immigrants. They are viewed by tourists as representing the "real history of Granada", and this image is the one being incorporated in the institutional heritage discourse of UNESCO. For the residents, however, they are merely immigrants, and their presence in the Albayzín is by no means an 'inherited'

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right, but a clear sign of the residents' "openness and hospitality". Although they consider the goods sold by the Moroccans as "cheap swindle", the fact that the street finally has a purpose is viewed as positive:

In the seventies, eighties it was a vegetable market; it was perfect to do your shopping when coming back from the city… you could find there everything, not like today, these cheap stuff they sell to tourists, but everyday things, foods, clothes… And then, I don't know why, probably because the houses were in such a bad condition that they were about to fall, this area was abandoned. Those years many people have left Albayzín and went to the outskirts where they could buy a new apartment with everything they could wish for… When the moors [*moros*] came, it way I think in the beginning of the nineties, the end of the eighties… and when they case they opened these shops you see today… No, if you ask me, there are problems with them, but if you ask me, it's better to have them than to have no one… it is better to have these shops than to be totally depopulated (I-4).

The popular denomination of North African immigrants as "moors" is also contributing to the perception of many that they are about to take over the neighborhood:

No, no, no… they are now too many. I have nothing against them, but everyone with their religion; they are coming here because we invited them, because they are good for the economy, and not only here, to attract the tourists, but in the fields, there are many working in agriculture, they are all moors working there… But now we have gone over the limits, and they are everywhere… It is disturbing for us to see their women, how they dress, how they are treated; this, we don't do in Spain… They are trying to take over, this is what I think. And the government allows them to do what they want; but what they

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don't see is that it's happening all over again, and in couple of years it will be too late for them; we'll be living in Morocco (I-9).

For the local authorities, however, Moroccan immigrants are a special case, and are central to the picture they have about the prosperous future of the neighborhood and its desired inhabitants:

> If a neighborhood is not desirable to live in, it will lose its population… There must be people who enjoy living in a neighborhood, because you cannot force someone to live there… And currently there are several types of people who love living in the Albayzín… First: older people with economic resources; I know many foreign married couples, a Norwegian one, a Dutch, another French lady, older people in their fifties and sixties… Why? Because here they can live a very calm life… They are retired, they have money put aside, they don't have to go to work… Then the Muslims, the Moroccans to be precise. They are very good for the neighborhood, contrary to what many people are saying. I find it positive. I find it very positive to have people of other nationalities and religions. I say this as a Catholic, because that it what I am, it is not that I am Muslim or anything …. Then there are the students. We need young people, because there are none. First of all, Erasmus students; I think that what we need is a campaign in the university, to attract them… And we need artisans. We need to settle artisans, because that's a very local activity. Like the Moroccans who have their shops below their apartments, we also need artisans living above their workshops (I-2).

This phenomenon should be treated within a discussion concerning immigration in Spain, something that would diverge from our main topic, but which is in our case very much related to gentrification and heritagification. As we could see in the previous section, local authorities

wish to maintain and increase the diversity of the neighborhood in both its class and cultural constitution. This includes other religious practices, independent of the believers' nationality, and this brings us to the real targets of local anti-Islamic sentiments, the congregants of the *Comunidad Islamica en España* (Spanish Islamic Community), a congregation of Muslim converts following a liberal and modern interpretation of the Koran. While North African immigrants "can live and make a living wherever they want" as long as they "learn to behave" (I-10), and as for their culture: "everyone with their religion", the Spanish converts are referred to as "disturbed" (I-9), either "mentally challenged", "terrorists", or "selling out their country" and their "inherited religion" to the 'moors' (I-4; I-8; I-9). The converts are those primarily incriminated with committing an unforgettable sin, renouncing the inherited catholic identity:

> Their parents were Catholics, their grandparents were Catholics… You can be a bad Christian, and going to church today is not the same as in my time; but to give away what you inherited from your parents, this, I cannot understand; And for what? Because you can see what these Muslims do (I-9)

From an economic perspective the converts are beneficial, and their financial power can help the neighborhood live up to the expectations raised by the heritage-tourism industry. It is still questionable whether this view will come to dominate the local authorities, but it seems to be gaining popularity after the long anti-Islamic hostility stirred by the construction of the Great Mosque in 2003 by the Islamic Community.

The history of local Islam and the mosque can be traced back to the late 1970s, when a group of young Spanish and English hippies living south of Granada in the mountainous region of Alpujarra, converted to Islam. It was a form of criticism toward the established

political order and economic system, and much of this feature had been preserved until today (I-5 and I-6). The land where the mosque was built had been empty and abandoned for a long time before the new Muslim community bought it. The current director of the mosque, the son of alpujarran hippies who later moved into the neighborhood, recalls seeing that piece of land as a "dunghill" in his childhood, and that he would proudly tell his classmates that "this is where the mosque will be built" (I-5). Evidently the plot had been observed by the new Muslims long before they could actually buy it in 1988. The decision to build the mosque where it stands, beside a church and near San Nicolás, with a spectacular view onto Alhambra, according to the director has nothing symbolic: "it was just a good deal in a very beautiful place. Today you would need a fortune to buy a spot like this in the Albayzín" (I-5). Another new Muslim, the real estate agent I quoted previously in a different context, assumes, however, that the Alhambra must have been a sentimental factor, "something to connect the mosque with the Muslim past" (I-7).

The construction could not begin for many years after the land was bought, because the city council and the commission supervising the Albayzín Plan were reluctant in giving out the building permit. Finally in May 1994 the commission authorized the mosque and the construction works began, ending in 2003. Since then the mosque and the Islamic Center is open to believers and visitors, its garden being overwhelmed by tourists during opening ours. The mosque appears now in all tourist guides and most of the local maps, and it can be asserted that it is the newest building being photographed by hundreds of tourists daily in the entire neighborhood.

For the Catholics, the decision to allow the construction of the mosque is a clear sign of the "corruption within the city hall", as a priest told to me. A member of the Residents' Association explained that "there is something fishy, because if you wanted to build a church, they would never allow it" (I-4). The mosque certainly fits into the picture that the local

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government and the UNESCO want to communicate, and the construction was given green light at the same time as the neighborhood was being proclaimed a World Heritage Site.
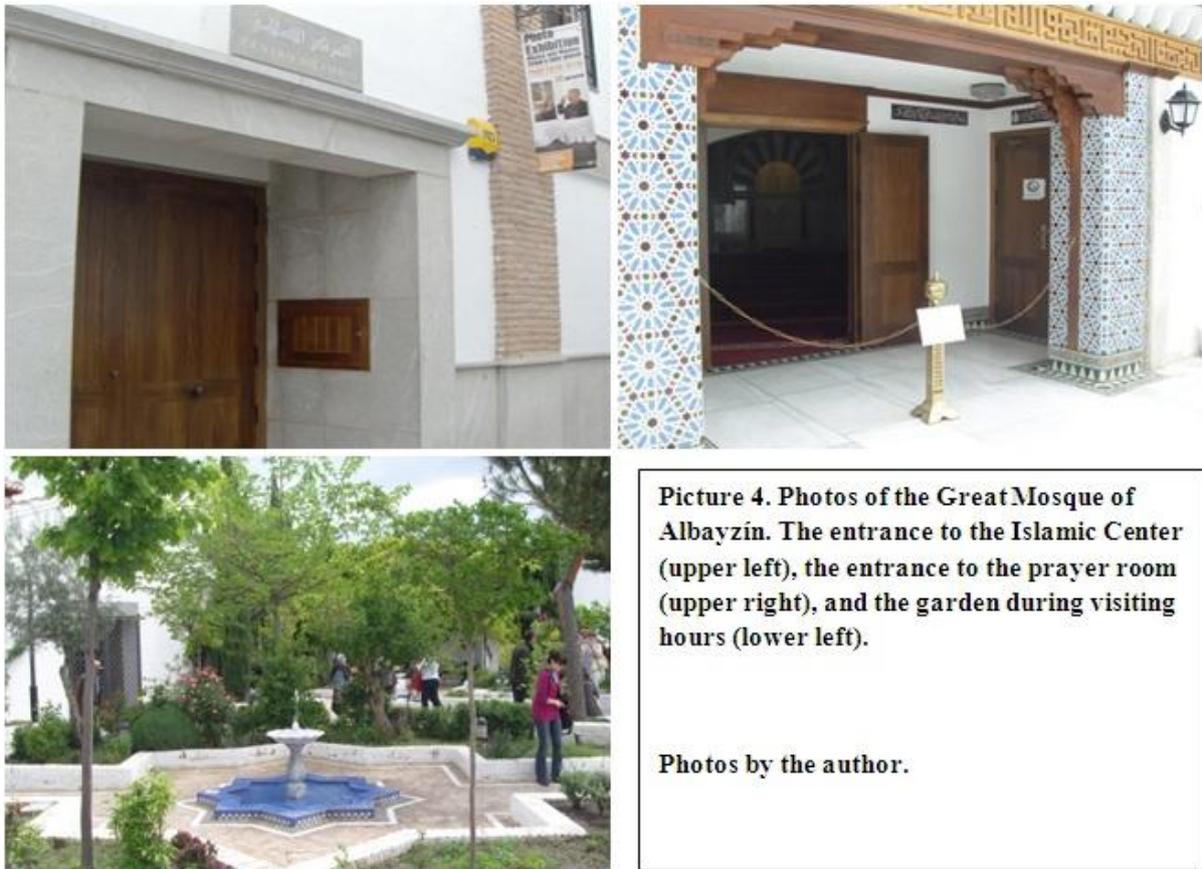


Picture 4. Photos of the Great Mosque of Albayzin. The entrance to the Islamic Center (upper left), the entrance to the prayer room (upper right), and the garden during visiting hours (lower left).

Photos by the author.

Notwithstanding the many years of conflict between the residents, the church and the Islamic Community regarding the mosque—a controversy too complex and eventful to be treated here—the director believes that "things how now changed, and I am certain that the city hall would agree with the extension of the mosque" (I-5).

The Great Mosque also helps with attracting Western Muslim converts to the neighborhood, and offers many activities and programs. The Islamic Center is a perfect place for documentation regarding the Moorish past of the town, and the conferences held there can be visited by anyone. It gives a new cultural taste to the neighborhood, something that would be highly appreciated by the new middle class population in a different context.

It can be concluded that there is an ongoing symbolic struggle between those advocating the presence of Islam and connecting it with a Moorish past, and those considering the neighborhood as a catholic cultural and material inheritance, where difference is welcomed but not prioritized. Just as gentrification, this more subtle process of heritagification is still far from reaching an end in the Albayzín. The present stage of the two could be summarized with an interesting antagonism: while there is not much available space left in the Albayzín, there is still room for a bigger mosque. The historical value of the neighborhood grows higher and higher every year, and an in-depth evaluation of the present phase of heritagification is a task for future studies.

# CONCLUSIONS

In my thesis I combined two perspectives, gentrification research on the one hand and heritage studies on the other, to present how the two historically related phenomena are aiding one another. My empirical case was the old Moorish neighborhood of Granada, the Albayzín, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1994.

I have shown that a very long 'historical *devalorization* process' had been affecting the neighborhood before its *revalorization* began, and how the value system behind these two concepts proper to gentrification theories, is different than the mostly economic context they are usually used in. A *historical and commemorative value*—taken from heritage studies—is the one creating the symbolic and economic capital that leads to gentrification, sometimes with its most brutal implications. People seem to have a clear knowledge of the negative processes involved in gentrification, but they generally perceive living in a World Heritage Site as a positive thing.

The main struggle in Albayzín develops around giving the neighborhood a future meaning, and deciding upon its future inhabitants and function within the city. These visions of the future are heavily influenced by visions of the past, and the main divide is along the Moorish or the Christian past of the neighborhood. While residents support the idea of the neighborhood—together with its buildings and churches—being an inheritance from earlier generations of Christians, the tourism industry and the actors interested in capitalizing the historical value of Albayzín favor a more distant Moorish past. During this process of capitalization, however, the authenticity of the place is being endangered, and this can be seen as another proof of how heritagification dissolves the idea of authenticity.

The issue of heritagification needs to be studied in all its empirical manifestations in order to be able to construct a more general theoretical basis valid for all populated historical heritage sites. I believe my thesis is a minor but apt contribution to increasing the awareness of the existing uneasy relation between heritage and gentrification, and fits into the a developing research agenda of both gentrification- and heritage studies (Evans 2002; Herzfeld 2010; Shaw 2005). Besides presenting one local manifestation of this global heritagification process, I set up an incipient theoretical framework that can orientate further studies, and which can and must be refined in the future.

# APPENDIX
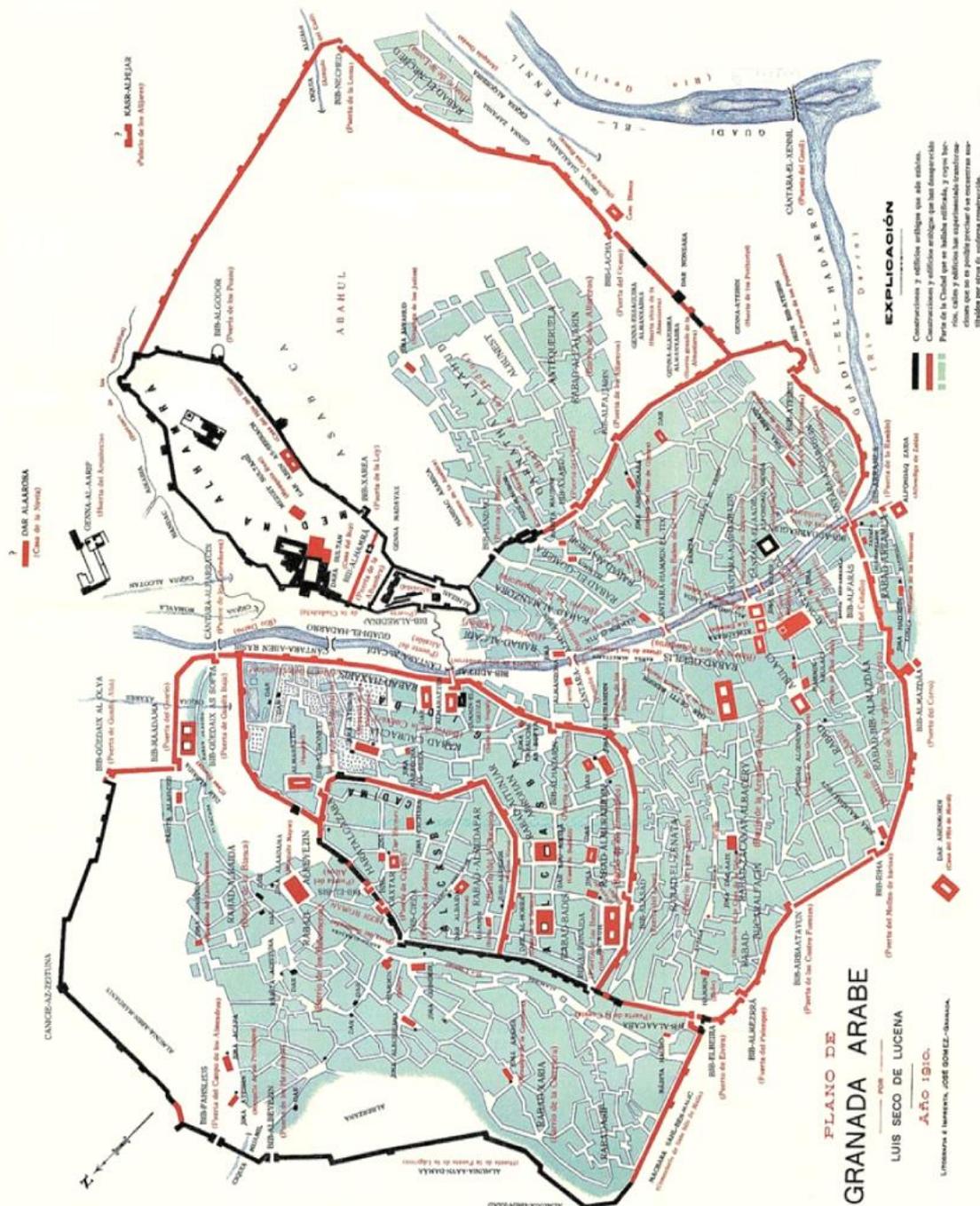
**Map 1. Map of Arab Granada by Luis Seco de Lucena, 1910.** Source: Calatrava and Morales 2005
Marked with black are the Moorish structures still standing in 1910, most of them being conserved until present time.

1 Cathedral
2 Great Mosque
3 Garnata al-Yahud

The core of the Ibero–Roman settlement
The Old Alcazaba, 8th–11th c.
Zirí extension of the Old Alcazaba, 11th c.
The medina and outlying districts, 11th–15th c.
Areas of expansion, 16th–18th c.
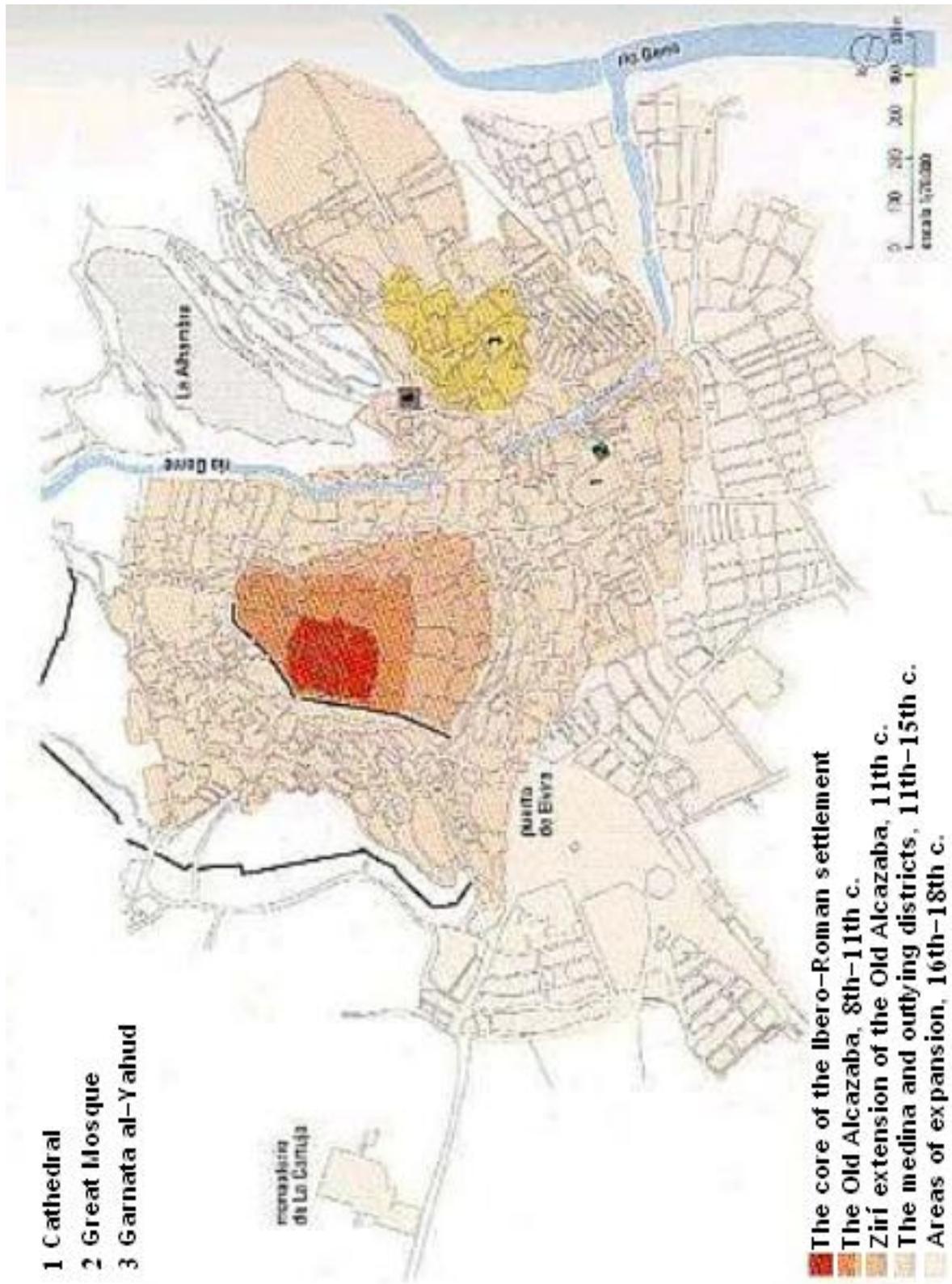
**Map2. The expansion of Granada since pre-Islamic times to the 18th century.**
Source: Calatrava and Morales 2005
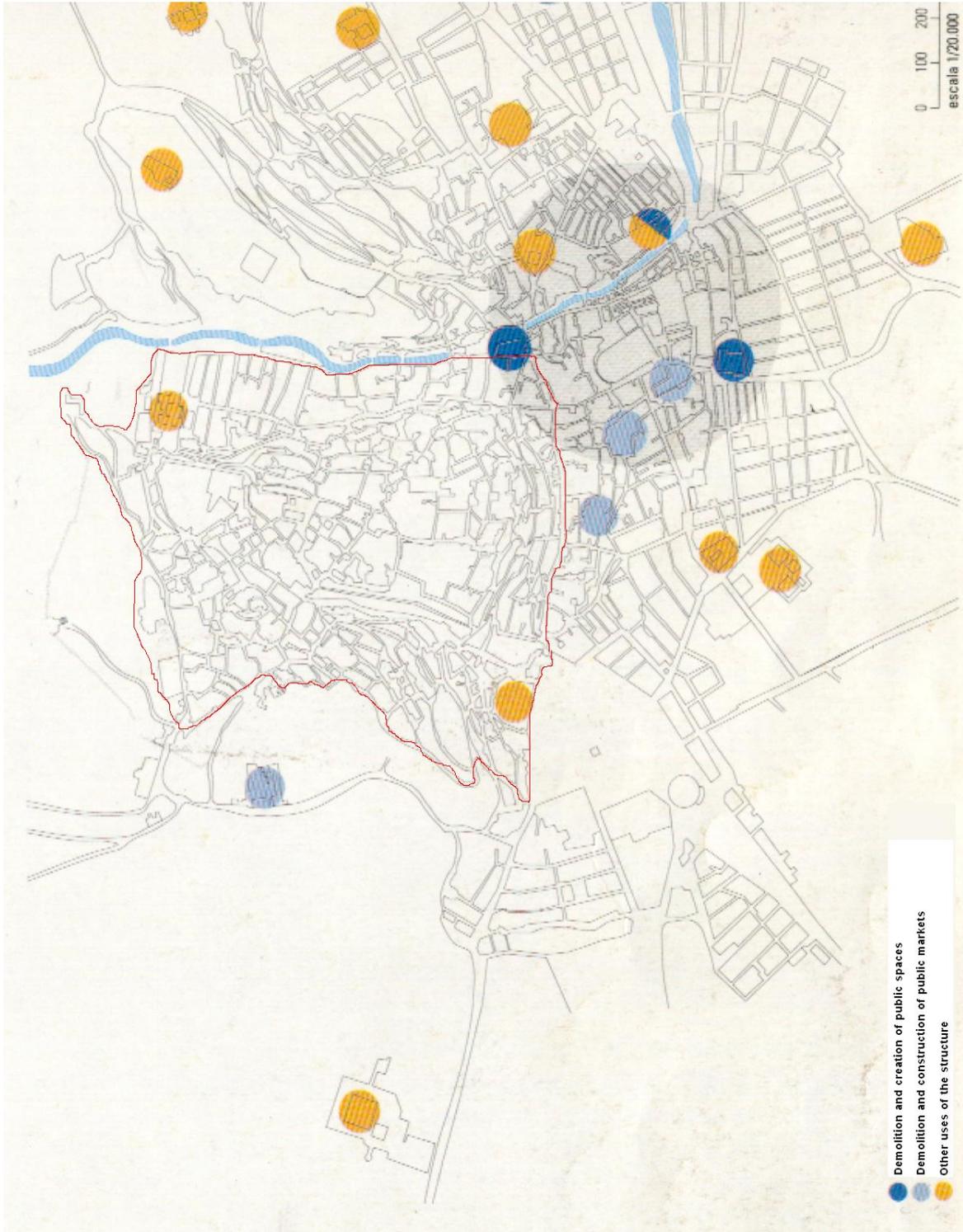
**Map 3. Interventions in the urban landscape between 1880-1890.**
Source: Calatrava and Morales 2005

**Legend:**

Layout of the Grand Via de Colón
Alternatives studied by La Reformadora Granadina
Project of connection with the train station
Vaulting of the river Darro

Landscaped public spaces
Markets
Theatres
City Hall

fábrica de gas

estación ferrocarril

escala 1/20.000

N

500 m
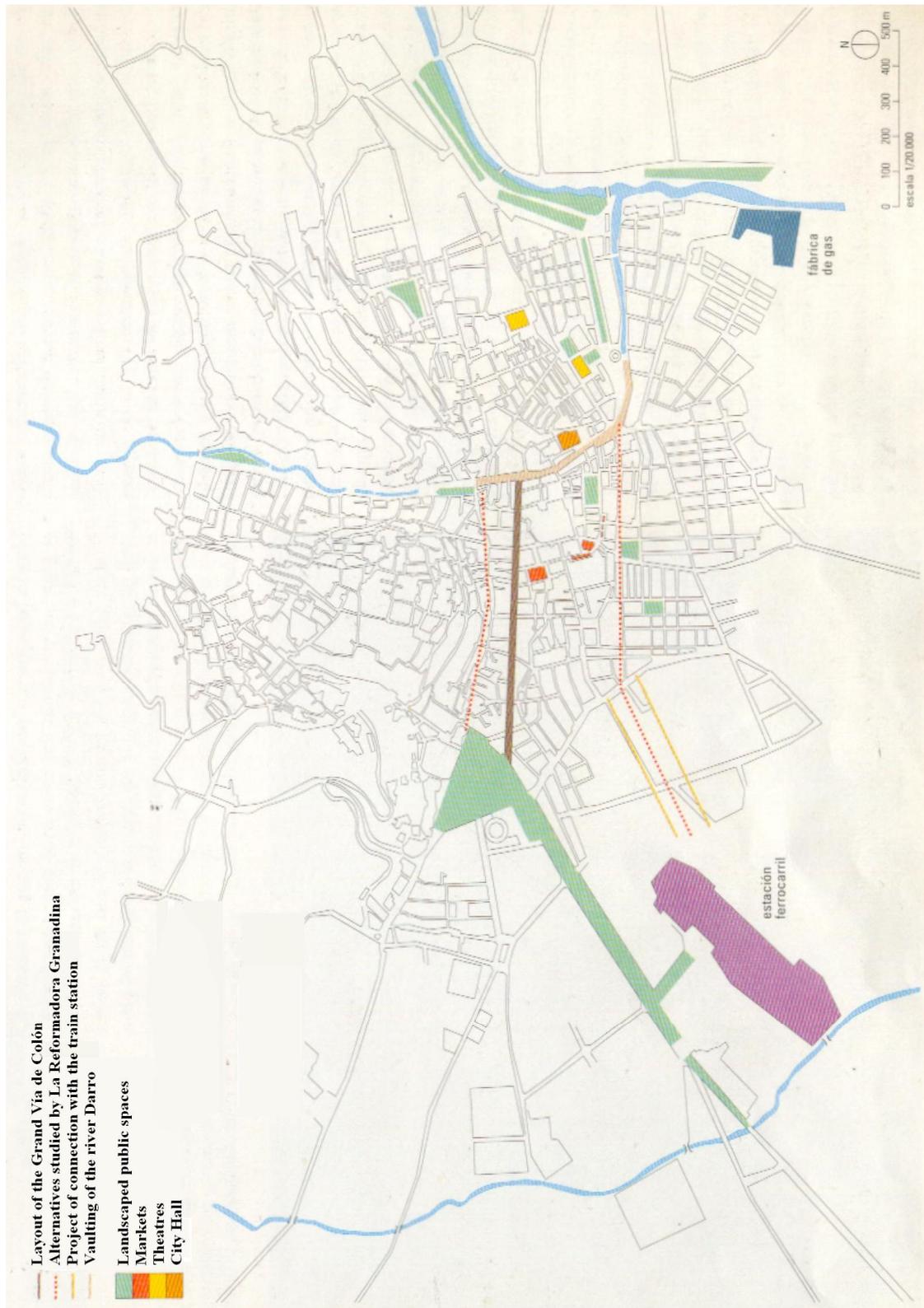
**Map 4. Haussmannization of Granada. Projects studied and conducted by the Reformadora Granadina at the end of the 19th century**
Source: Calatrava and Morales 2005
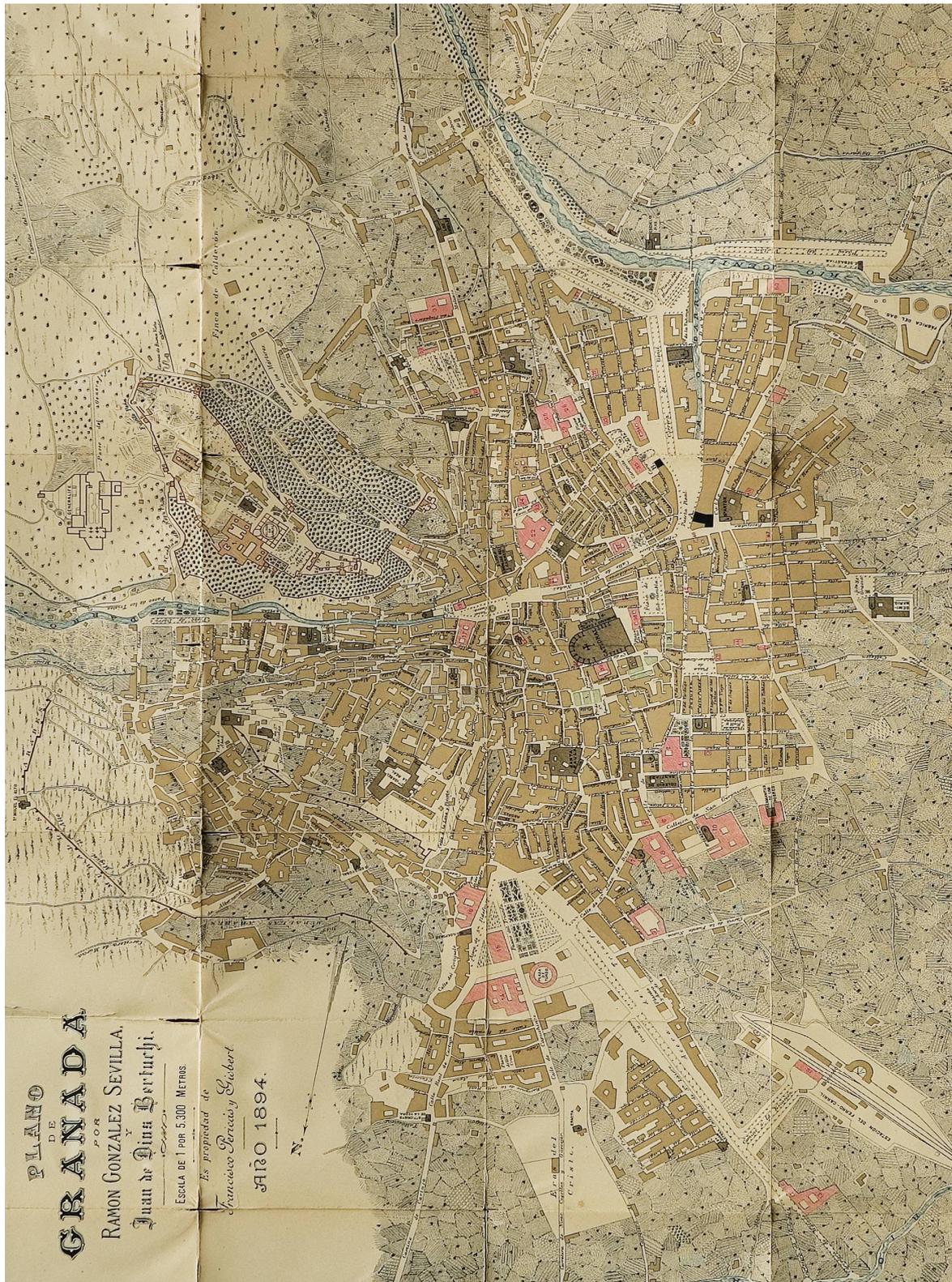
**Map 5. Map of Granada by Sevilla and Bertuchi, from 1894.**
**Source: Calatrava and Morales 2005**

**Map 6. Tourist map of Granada**
**Source: http://www.granadain.com/pdf_guia/pdf/mapa_granada.html**
**Marked with red are the places often referred to in the text.**
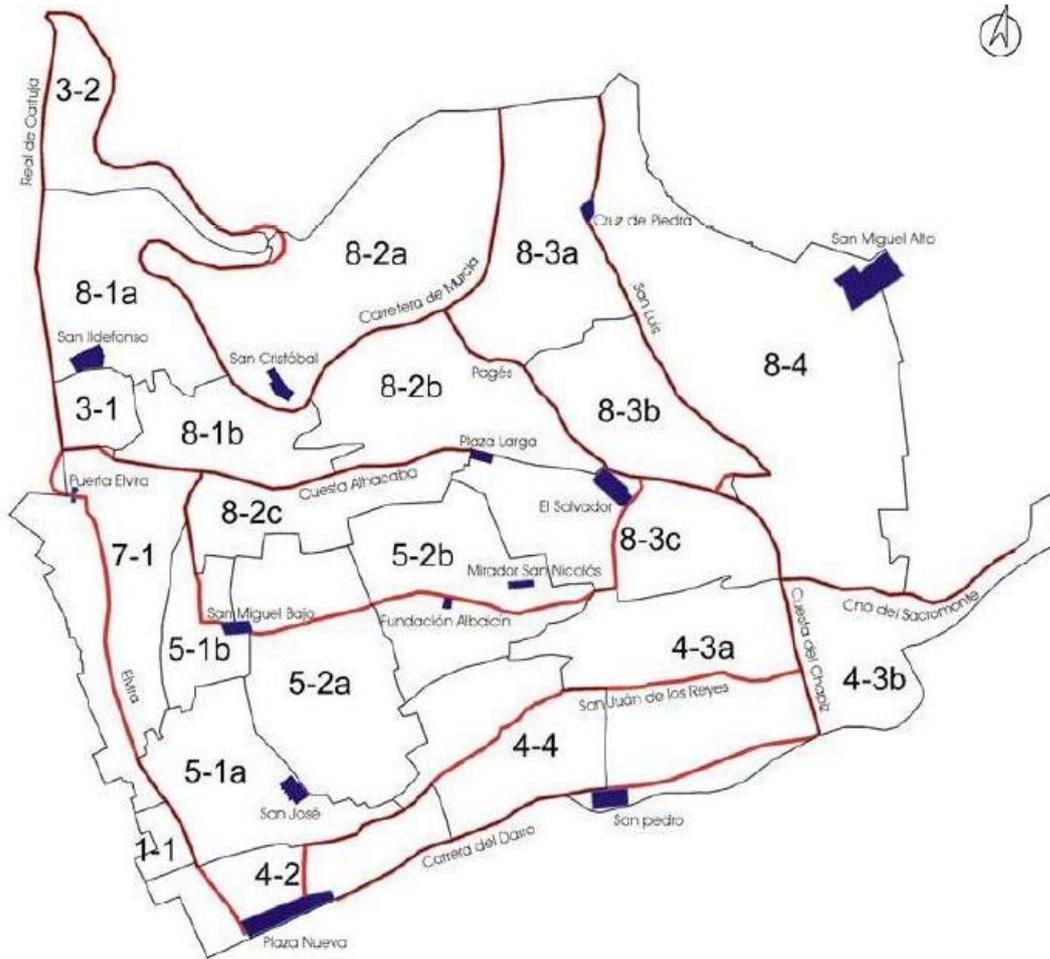
**Map 7. The internal division of Albayzín by the PEPRI 1990.**
**Source: Cabrera Medina 2009.**

| District | Seccion | Sector | Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | - | Banco de España (Bank of Spain) |
| 3 | 1 | - | La Merced |
| 3 | 2 | - | Real de Cartuja |
| 4 | 2 | - | Plaza Nueva |
| 4 | 3 | a | Paseo de los Tristes |
| 4 | 3 | b | Palacio de los Córdova |
| 4 | 4 | - | Santa Catalina de Zafra - Carrera del Darro Centro |
| 5 | 1 | a | Calderería Nueva – San José |
| 5 | 1 | b | San Miguel Bajo – La Lona |
| 5 | 2 | a | Sta. Isabel la Real |
| 5 | 2 | b | San Nicolas |
| 7 | 1 | - | Elvira - Zenete |
| 8 | 1 | a | San Ildefonso |
| 8 | 1 | b | Cuesta de la Alhacaba |
| 8 | 2 | a | San Cristóbal |
| 8 | 2 | b | Plaza Larga |
| 8 | 2 | c | Muralla Zirí |
| 8 | 3 | a | Cruz de Piedra |
| 8 | 3 | b | Plaza Aliatar |
| 8 | 3 | c | San Salvador |
| 8 | 4 | - | San Luis – San Miguel Alto |
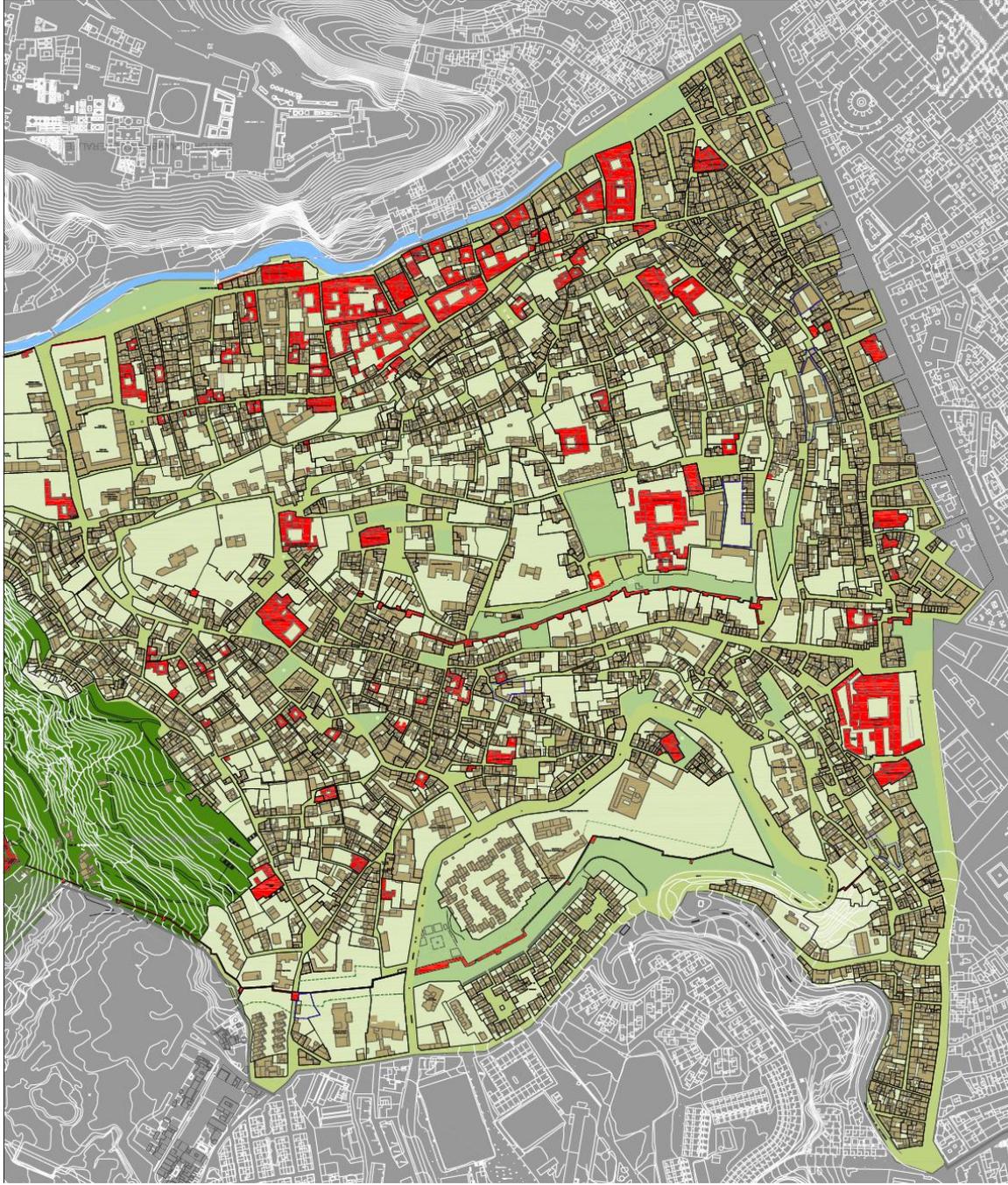
Map 8. Land and building types
**Source: PGOU2005 and PEPRI 2005**
**Translated and edited by the author**

Consolidated land

Unconsolidated land

Undevelopable land

Public spaces free
of buildings

Parks and gardens

Cultural monuments and
properties
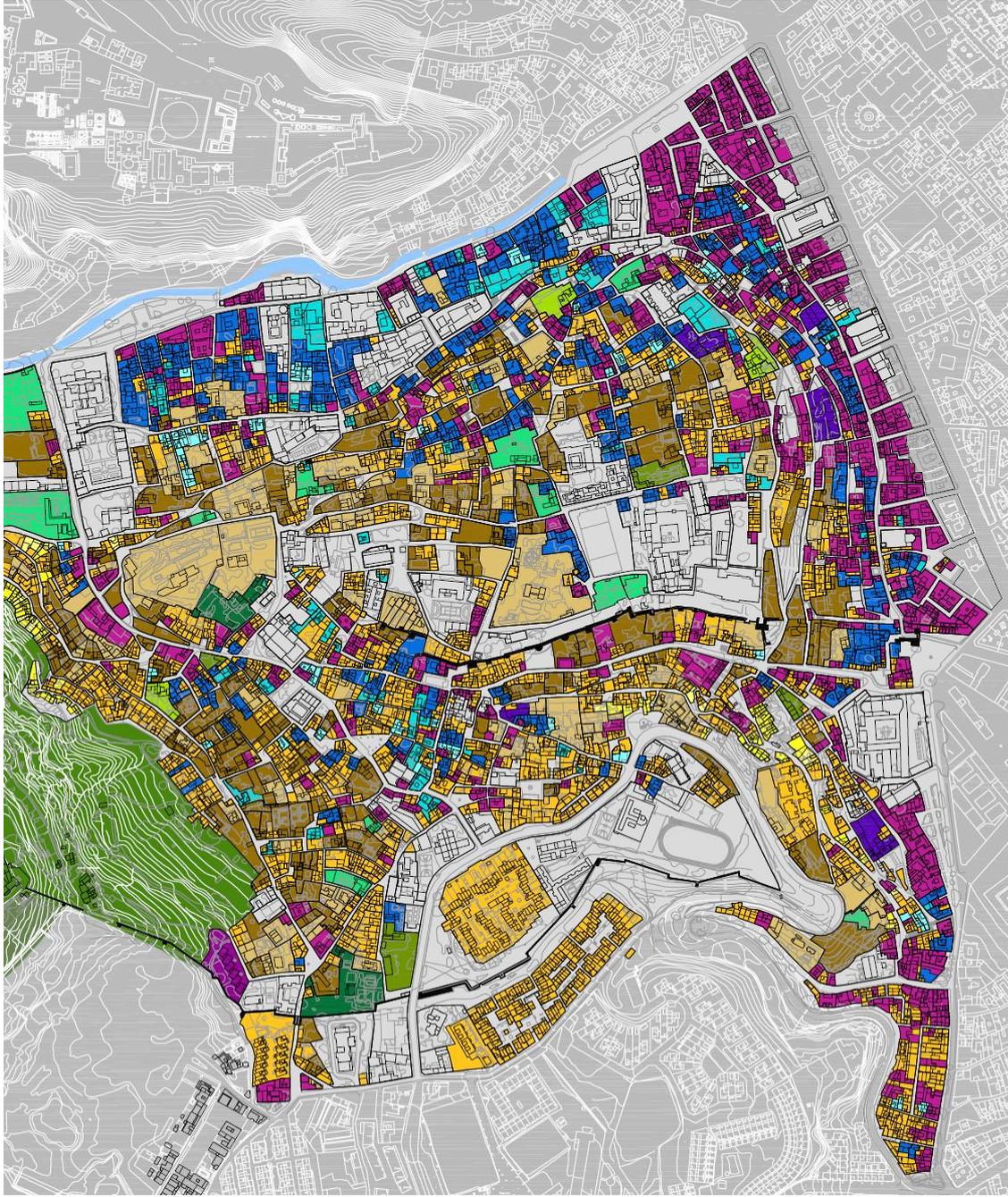
Map 9. Types of houses

**Source PEPRI 2005**
**Translated and edited by the author**

Courtyard house
Single family courtyard house
Shared courtyard house
Shared house aligned to street
Isolated shared block
Isolated traditional carmen
Traditional carmen facing the street
Traditional urban carmen
Transformed traditional carmen
Isolated single family house
Single family house facing the street
Single family house aligned to street
Folk house with cave
Habitable cave
Single family/cave on Sacromonte

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