



Path Plasticity in Coastal Destinations

Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Issues *A Demand Side Approach*

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Research group on
territorial analysis
and tourism studies
(GRATET)



Department of Geography

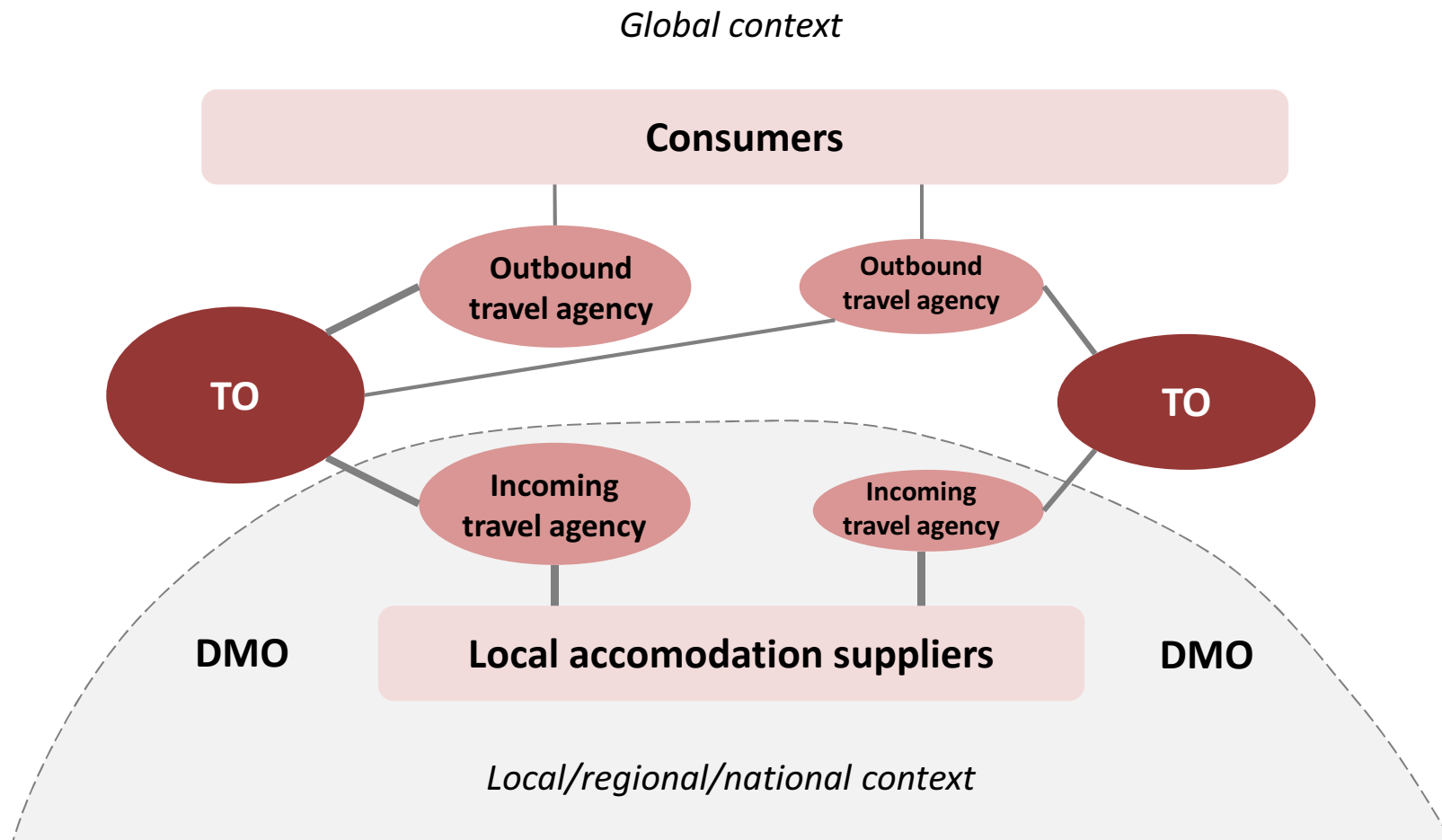


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1 Mediated markets in mass destinations

Global Distribution Networks



2 Key question

“International tour companies
play a critical role in the international tourism industry:
they link millions of individual consumers, with large numbers of
individual enterprises in the travel industry, mainly the accomodation sector”
(Shaw & Williams, 2002)

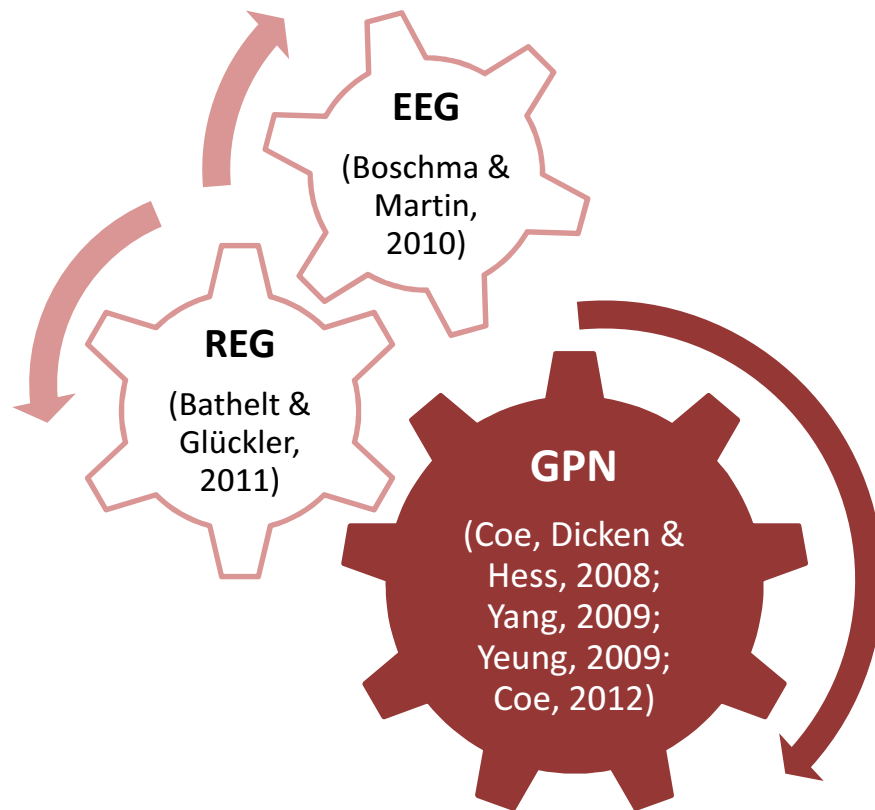


“Strategic alliances’ or ‘partnerships’
between firms operating in tourism distribution networks is critical “
(Crotts, Buhalis & March, 2000)



¿Do alliances enable mass destinations path plasticity?

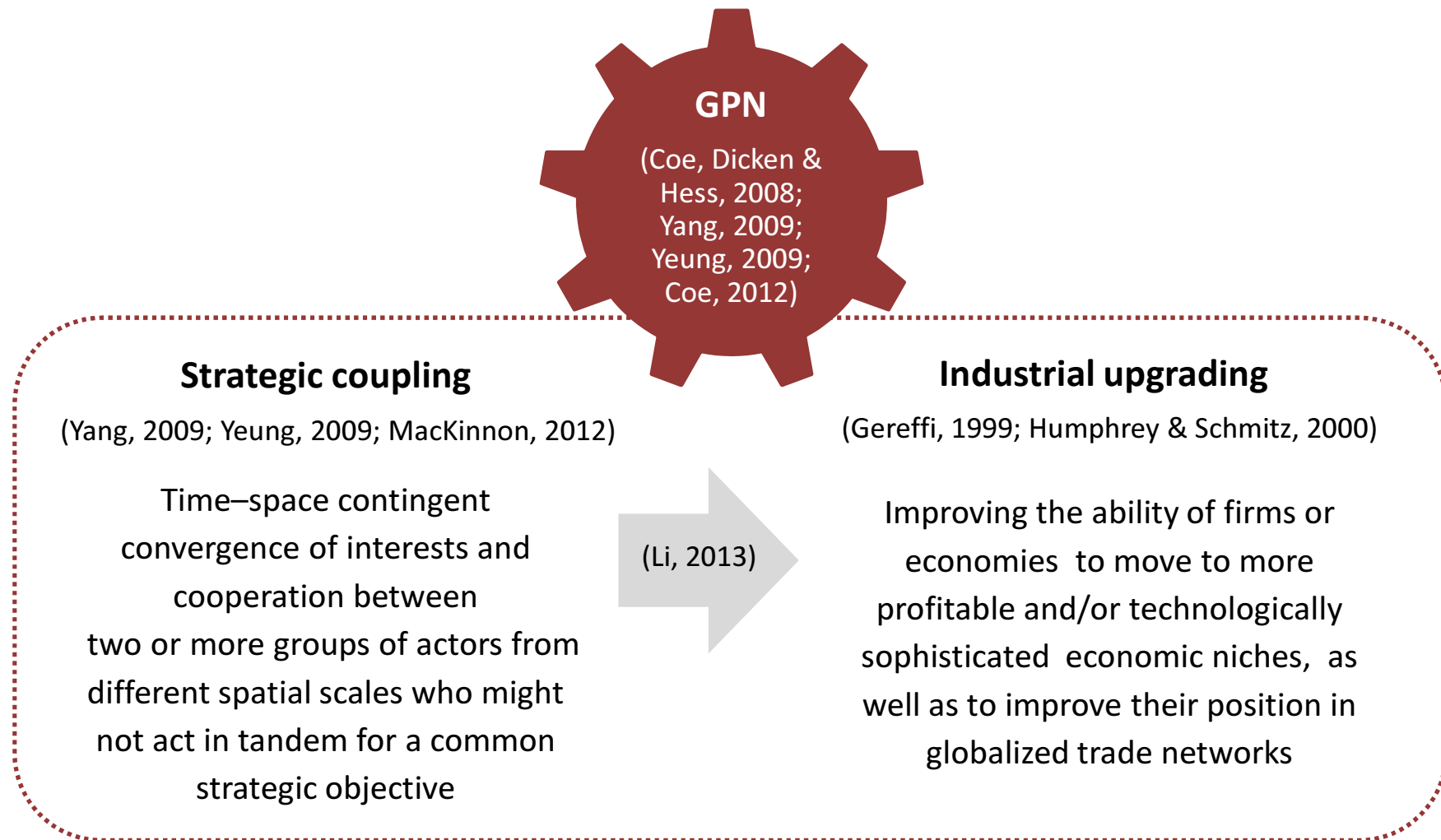
2 Analytical framework: general perspective



“LTD evolution as a **complex, path- and place-dependent** process that is determined by the **action** and **interaction** of stakeholders and their ability to adapt or create new paths, and, thus, to survive in response to **local and global changes.**”

(Sanz-Ibáñez & Anton-Clavé, 2014)

2 Analytical framework: specific notions



3 Central Costa Daurada (cCD), Catalonia



2.7 million visitors

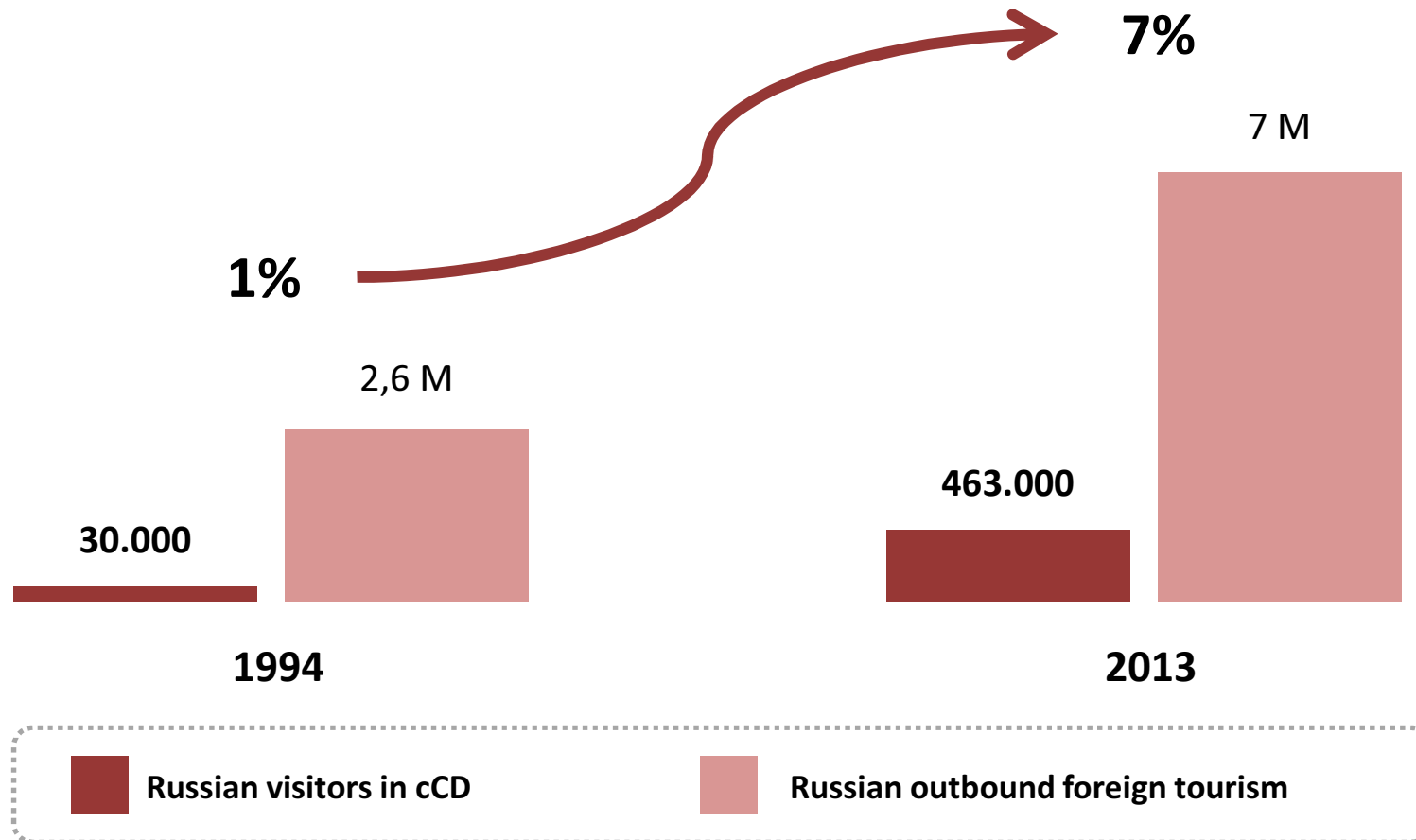
11.5 million overnights

50,500 accommodation places

*Source: Report of regulated accommodation occupancy 2013.
Costa Daurada Tourism Observatory*



3 The Russian market at the destination (I)

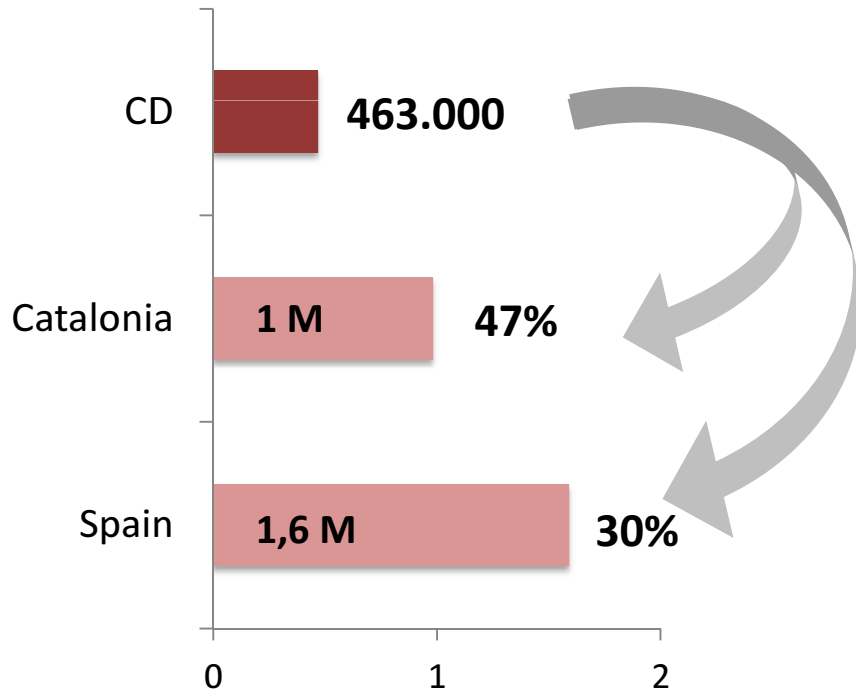


Source: Estimated data by Costa Daurada and Catalan DMO's

3 The Russian market at the destination (II)

Main destination for Russians in Catalonia & Spain

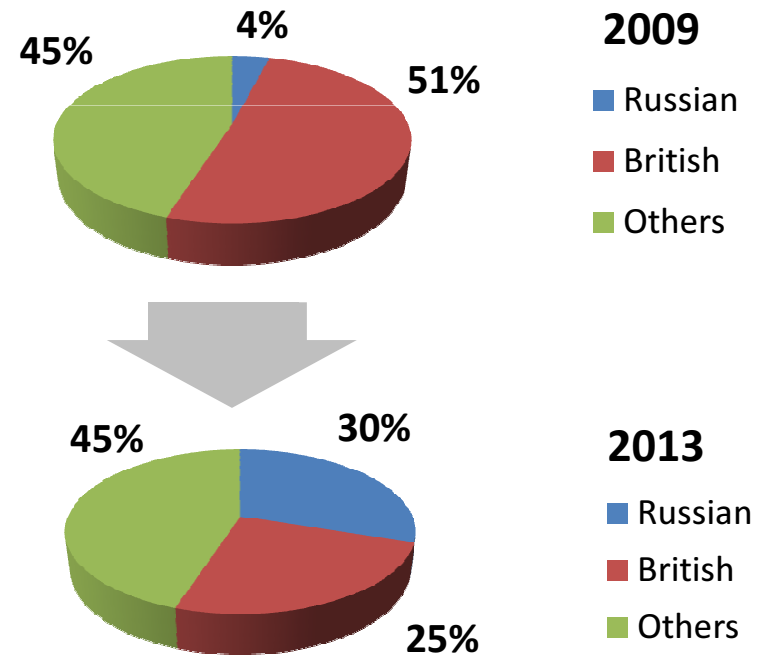
Number of Russian tourists 2013



Source: INE and Costa Daurada Tourism Observatory

First international market, overtaking the British – traditional market for decades

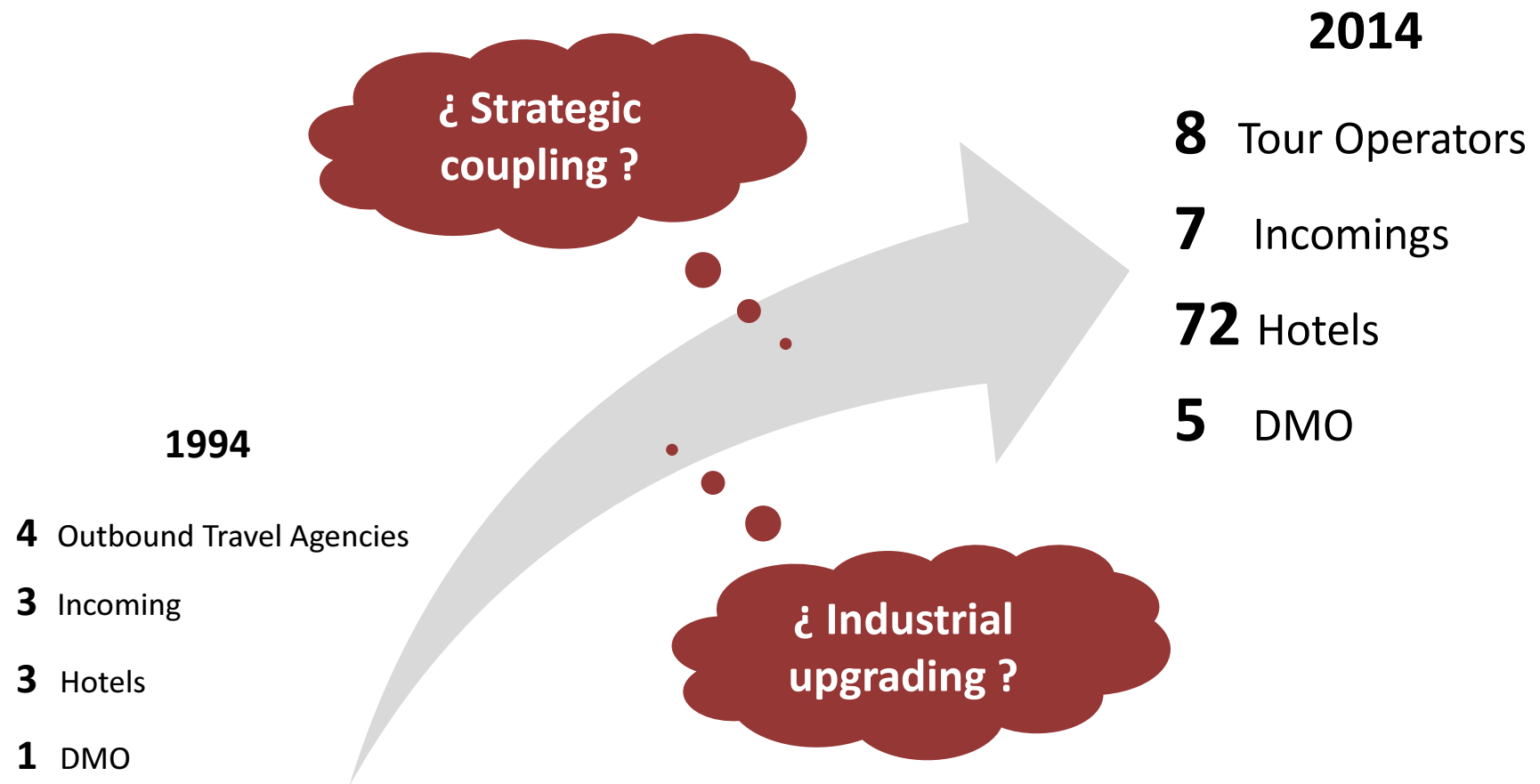
Percentage of International Tourists



Source: Costa Daurada Tourism Observatory

3 The Russian market at the destination (III)

The Russian market Global Distribution Network in cCD



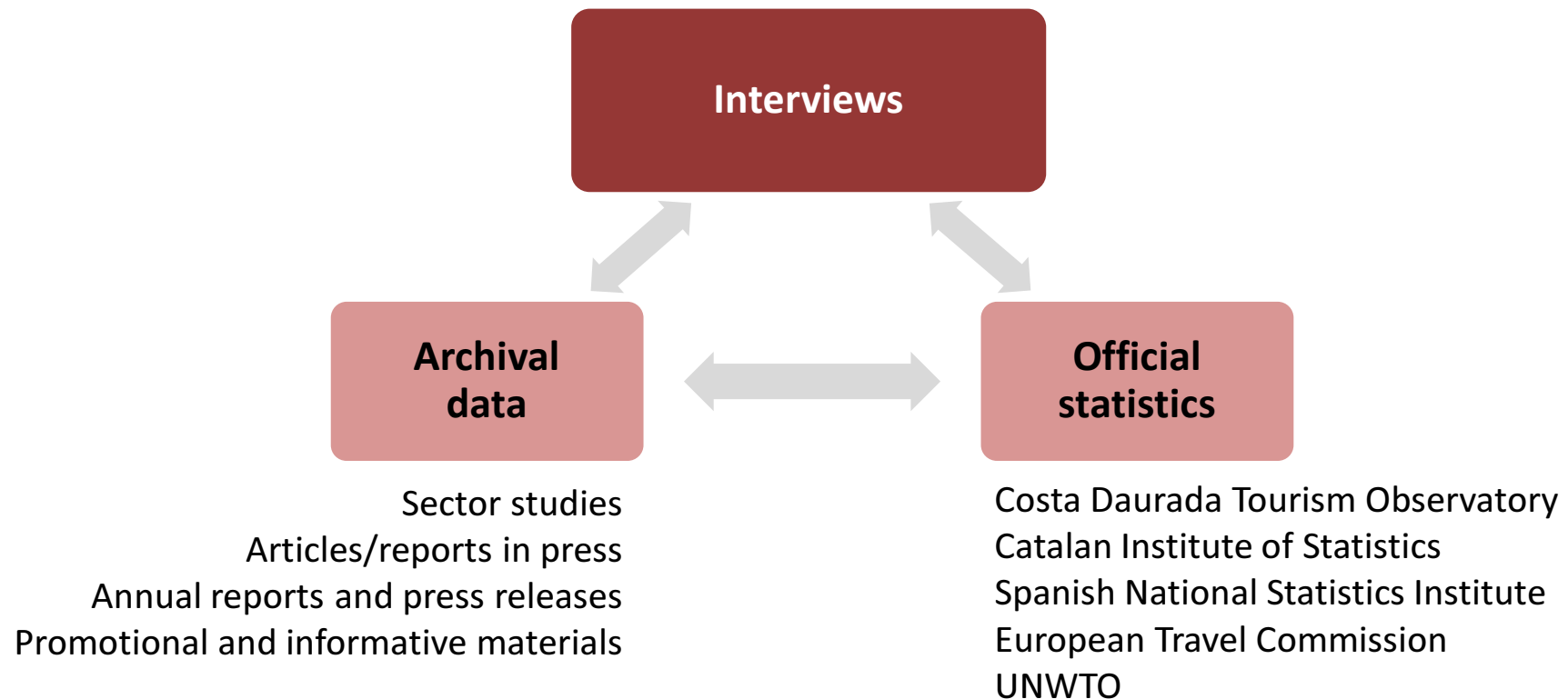
4 Methodology

18 key stakeholders

Selection: snowball & reputation method

Type: personal, semi-structured, depth interviews

6 Hotel chains + 7 Incomings + 3 TTOO + 2 DMO



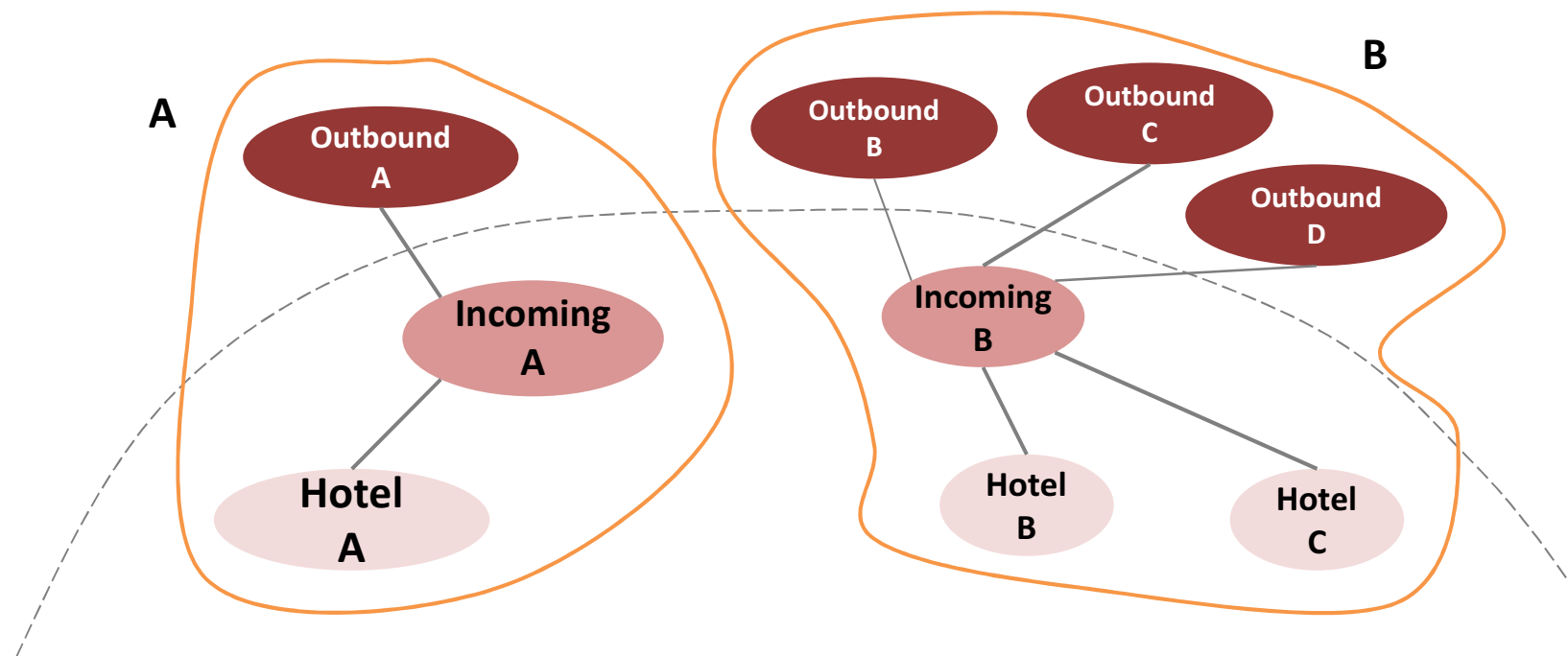
5 Strategic coupling dynamics (I)

1994

2004

2014

Global context



Local/regional/national context

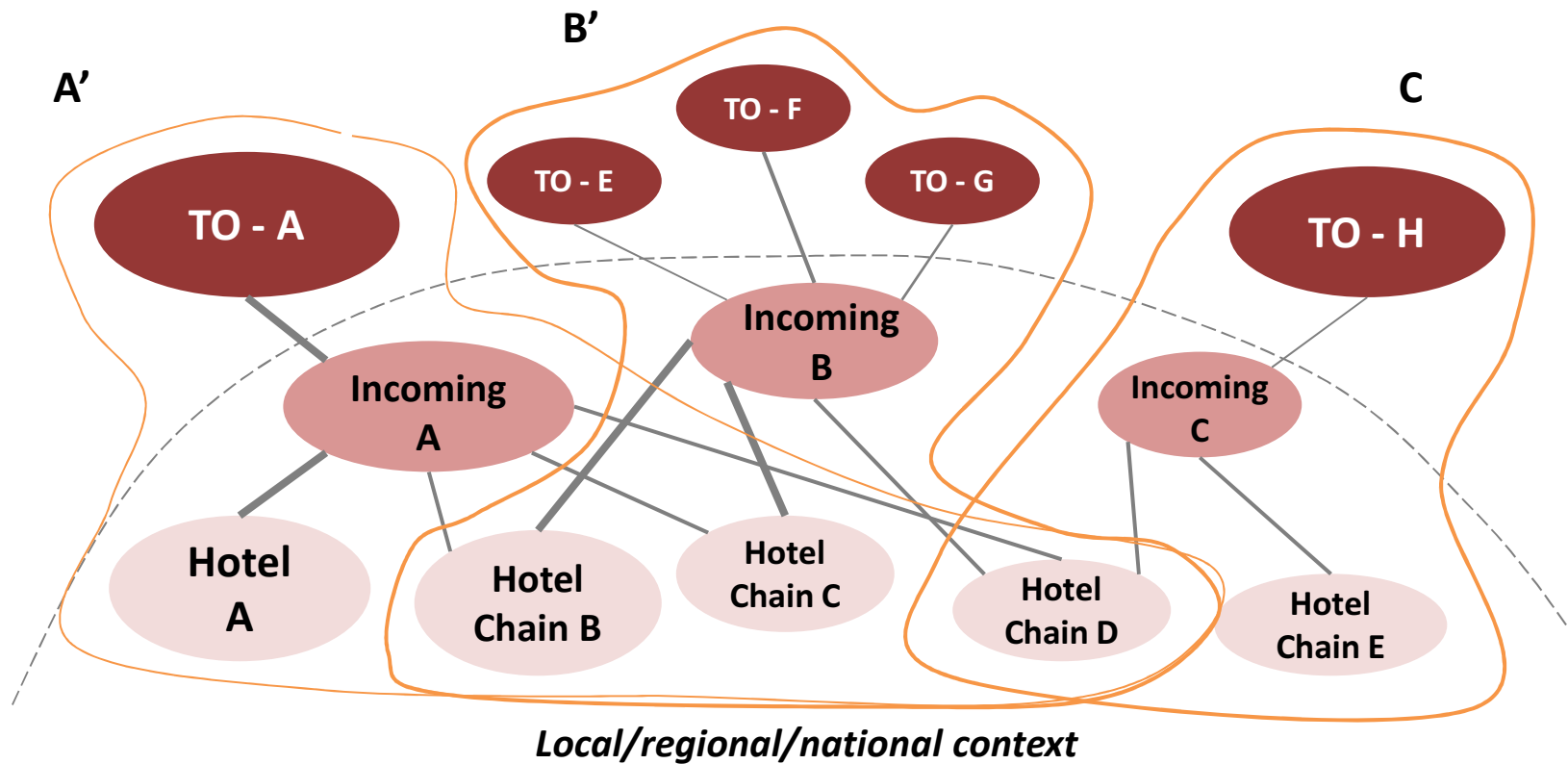
5 Strategic coupling dynamics (II)

1994

2004

2014

Global context



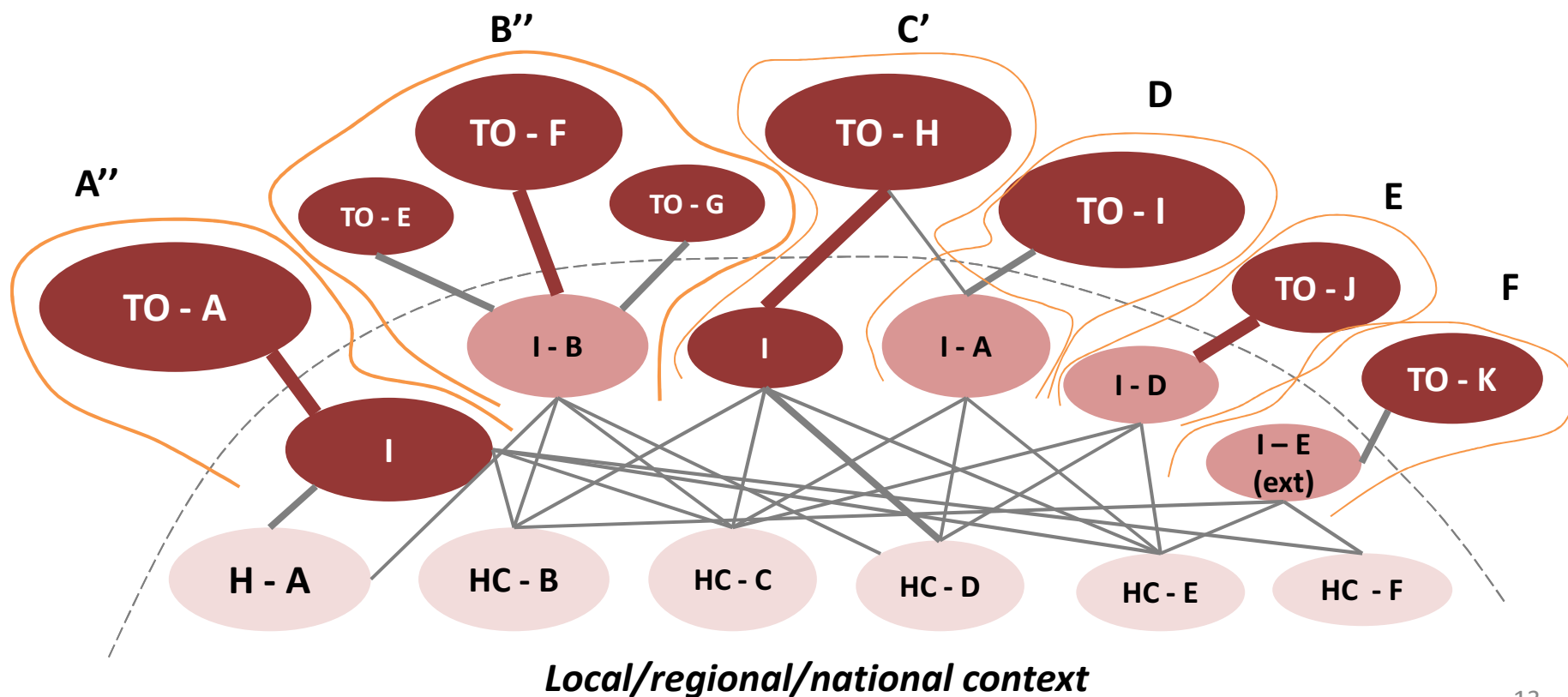
5 Strategic coupling dynamics (III)

1994

2004

2014

Global context



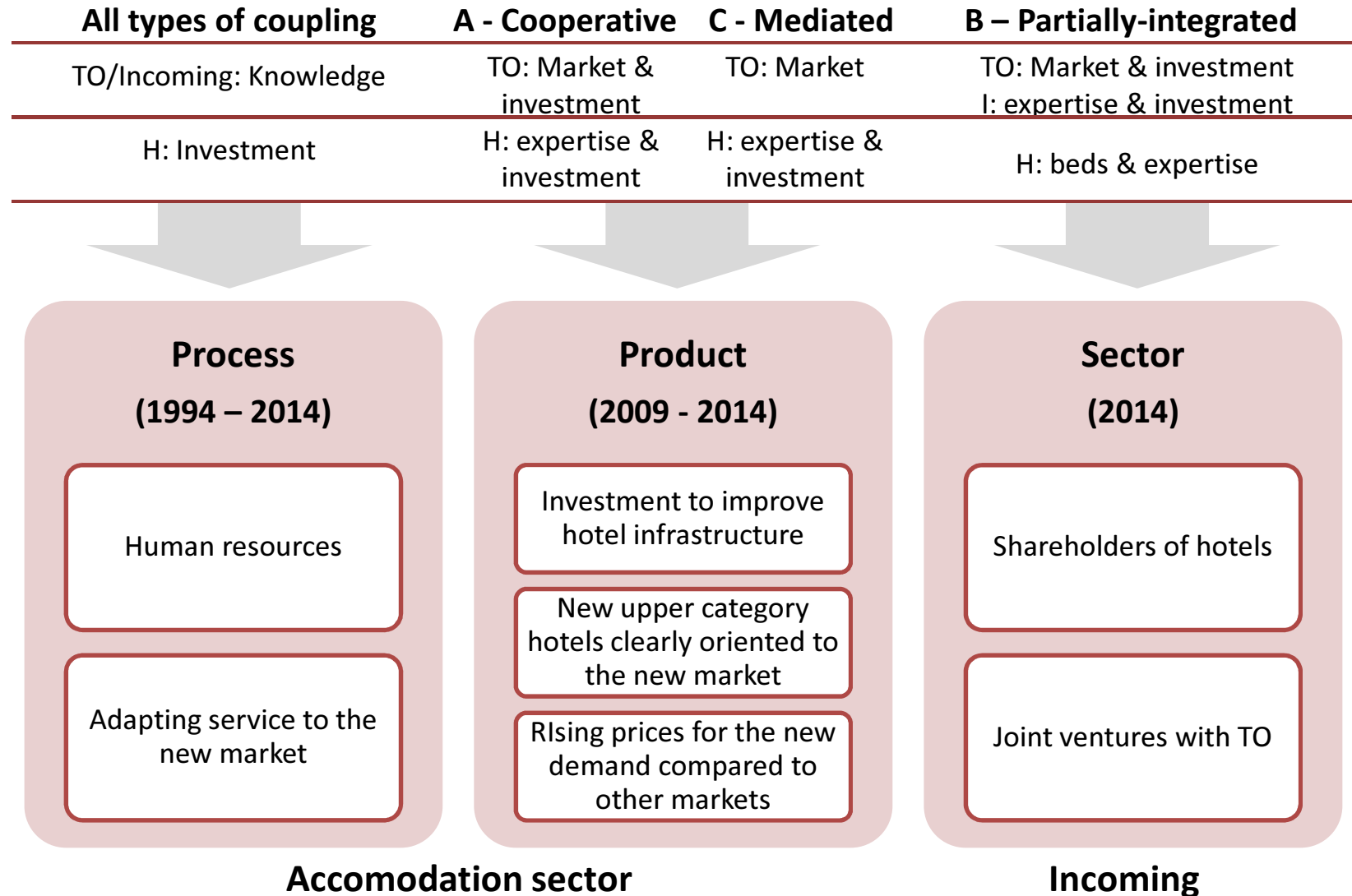
5 Strategic coupling dynamics (IV)

Type	1994	2004	2014
A	Emergence: bottom-up (hoteliers) Channel: mediated Relations: cooperative Goal: mutual benefit Power: balanced Dependence: low	Channel: mediated Relations: cooperative/hierarchical Goal: mutual benefit Power: balanced Dependence: low	Channel: integrated Relations: cooperative/hierarchical Goal: mutual benefit Power: balanced/imbalanced (TO) Dependence: medium
B	Emergence: bottom-up (coupling with Russian TTOO) Channel: mediated Relations: cooperative Goal: mutual benefit Power: imbalanced (Incoming) Dependence: low - medium	Channel: mediated Relations: cooperative - diversified Goal: mutual benefit Power: imbalanced (Incoming) Dependence: low	Channel: partially-integrated Relations: cooperative - diversified Goal: mutual benefit Power: balanced Dependence: medium
C		Emergence: top-down (TO) Channel: multi-mediated Relations: professional Goal: business Power: imbalanced Dependence: medium	Channel: integrated/mediated Relations: professional Goal: business Power: imbalanced Dependence: high
D			Emergence: bottom-up (coupling with Russian & Turkish TTOO) Channel: partially-integrated Relations: professional Goal: business Power: imbalanced (TO) Dependence: high
E			
F			

Cooperative & locally-driven
(coupling with Russian TTOO)

Imbalanced & globally-driven
(coupling with Russian & Turkish TTOO)

5 Industrial upgrading dynamics



5 Contextual milestones influencing coupling

Local/regional/national Policies and actions

- 1989 – CRT
- 1992 – Barcelona Olympic Games
- 1993 – Catalan DMO in Moscow**
- 1994 – Regional DMO – start marketing actions
- 1995 – PortAventura Theme Park
- 1998 – Universal Studios Resort strategy
- 1999 – Negotiation of Visa expedition issues**
- 2008 – Local DMO intensify promotion
- 2009 – Negotiation of Visa expedition issues**

Global events

- 1991 – Dissolution of the Soviet Union
- 1992 – First outbound travel agencies**
- 1995 – First Russian TTOO
- 1998 – Russian banks crisis/restructuring TO
- 2000 – Emergence of Turkish TTOO
- 2001 – Improvement of Visa expedition procedure**
- 2008 – Economic crisis
- 2010 – Schengen modification (Visa expedition)**
- 2013-14 – Ukraine crisis?**



6 Coupling & mass destinations path plasticity

- In the case of cCD, **markets act as a catalyst** of new opportunities for business, upgrading the destination and generating new plastic paths of development
- Changes in demand markets** are the result of a **proactive coupling strategy** led by local entrepreneurs -in cooperation with DMOs at different scales- playing with global distribution agents
- Small-group agency** become a collective strategy for a destination as a whole, which reinforces the role of entrepreneurship in destination governance
- Market changes that once act as a source of destination path plasticity could end up in new **lock-in effects**
- Successful upgrading generate new forms of coupling less bottom-up driven and with more **imbalanced power relations**

6 Coupling & mass destinations path plasticity

GPN theories offer powerful insights to understand the role of **global-local connections** on destination evolution, not only internal dynamics

'Strategic coupling' and 'industrial upgrading' notions might be adapted to the tourism field through a **Global Distribution Networks approach**

Research on coupling processes under the umbrella of GDN and the upgrading effects resulting from these relations should be included in the analysis of **mass tourism destinations path plasticity**



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Thanks for your attention!

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