

Exploring the 'moments' framework of tourism destination evolution

Julie Wilson

Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez

Salvador Anton Clavé



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1 Tourism evolutionary approaches

... the *path metaphor*



Destinations are **constantly in-the-making**



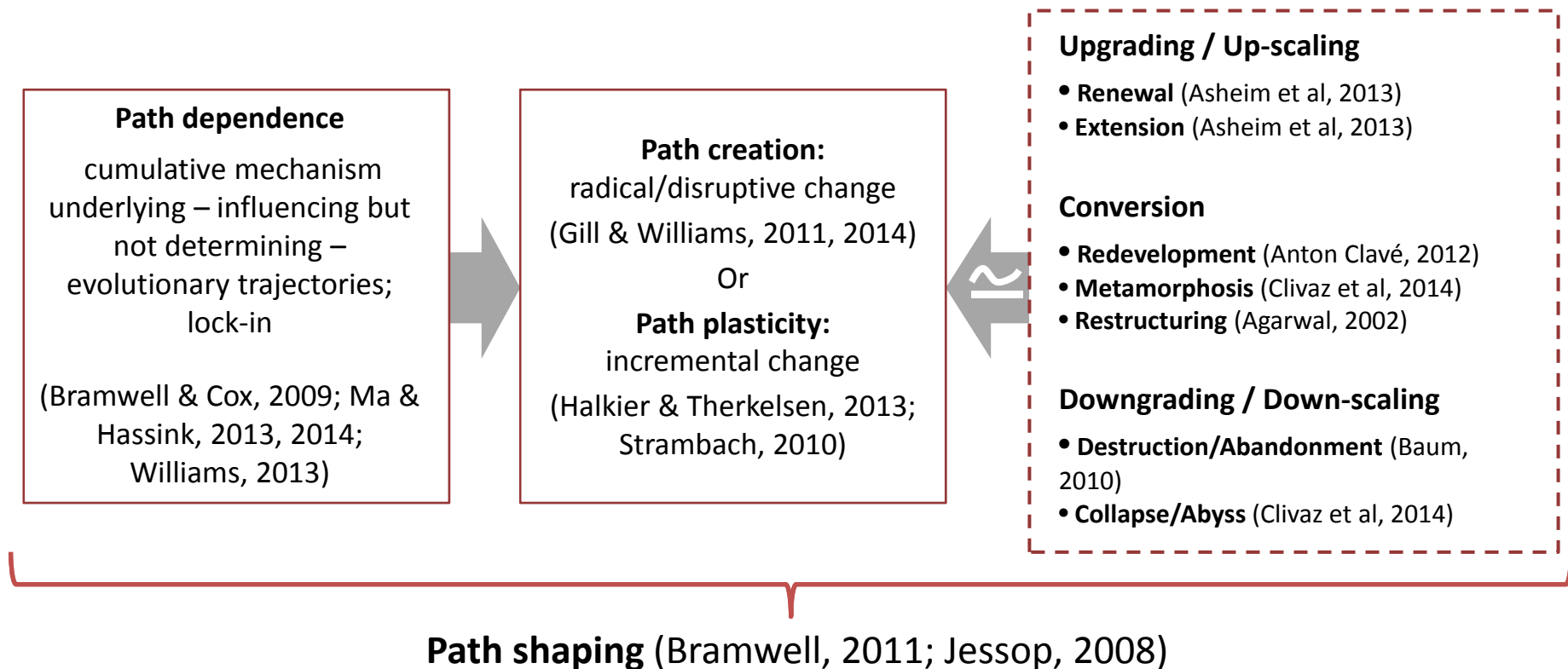
Distinctive powerful forms of interpreting **the nuanced, local-specific dynamics** of tourist places over time



Agency and selective/spontaneous 'happenings' can unlock tourism places from stagnation, to avoid (or reverse) decline

2 Paths in tourism destination evolution...

New perspectives aiming to understand the (often unexpected) ways in which destinations can break with their historical legacies and structures and change their paths...



3 'Moments' in the *path metaphor*

Path dependence - concern of economists and economic geographers, while those in urban social geography have started to engage with the idea in understanding urban change

Moulaert *et al* (2007) - **discursive, selective 'moments'** in urban socio-economic change and path dependency [including policies / key agencies]

Moments are ALREADY talking points, but different terminologies – Hall (2014) '**critical events**'; Mariotti & Zirulia (2014) '**shocks**' at a local scale; Ritchie *et al.* (2013) '**crisis-related events**'; Baggio & Sainaghi (2011) '**triggering events**'...

But what role do 'moments' have in change?

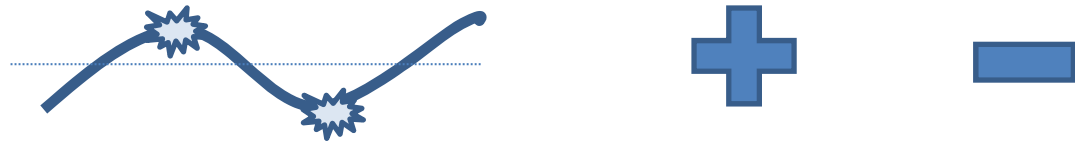
4 'Moments' in path shaping

More attention could be paid to what happens between the path shaping trajectory's start and end points: ***'Join the dots'***

Pertinent to conceptualise ***various*** 'moments' over the course of tourism evolution, in addition to a given evolutionary trajectory

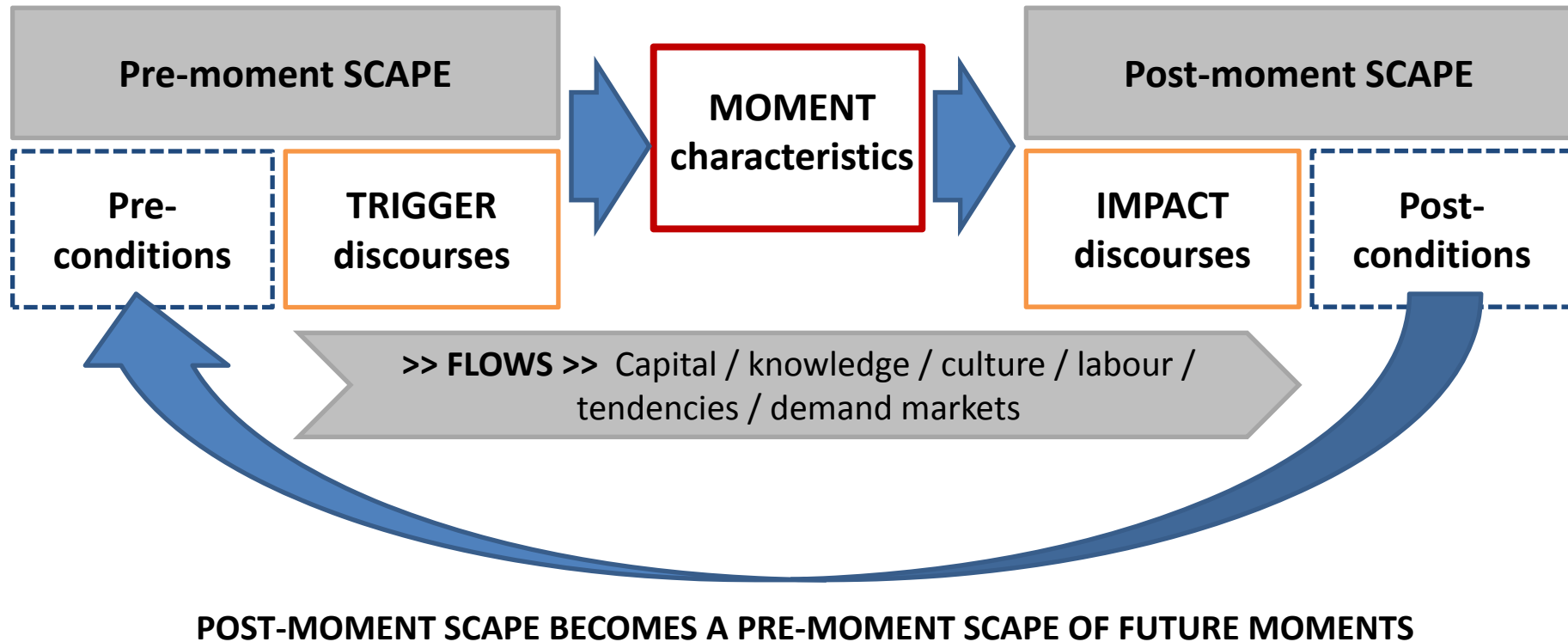
Different 'moments' along an evolutionary path have **different characteristics** and a tourism performance approach is insufficient

Differential calculus: **inflection point...** a point on a curve at which the curvature or concavity changes sign from plus to minus or from minus to plus.



'Moment' as *inflection point* from an evolutionary approach is a **catalyst for change** in the economic /social urban development pathway...

5 The 'moments' conceptual framework



6 Discourses of the moment: *triggers* and *impacts*

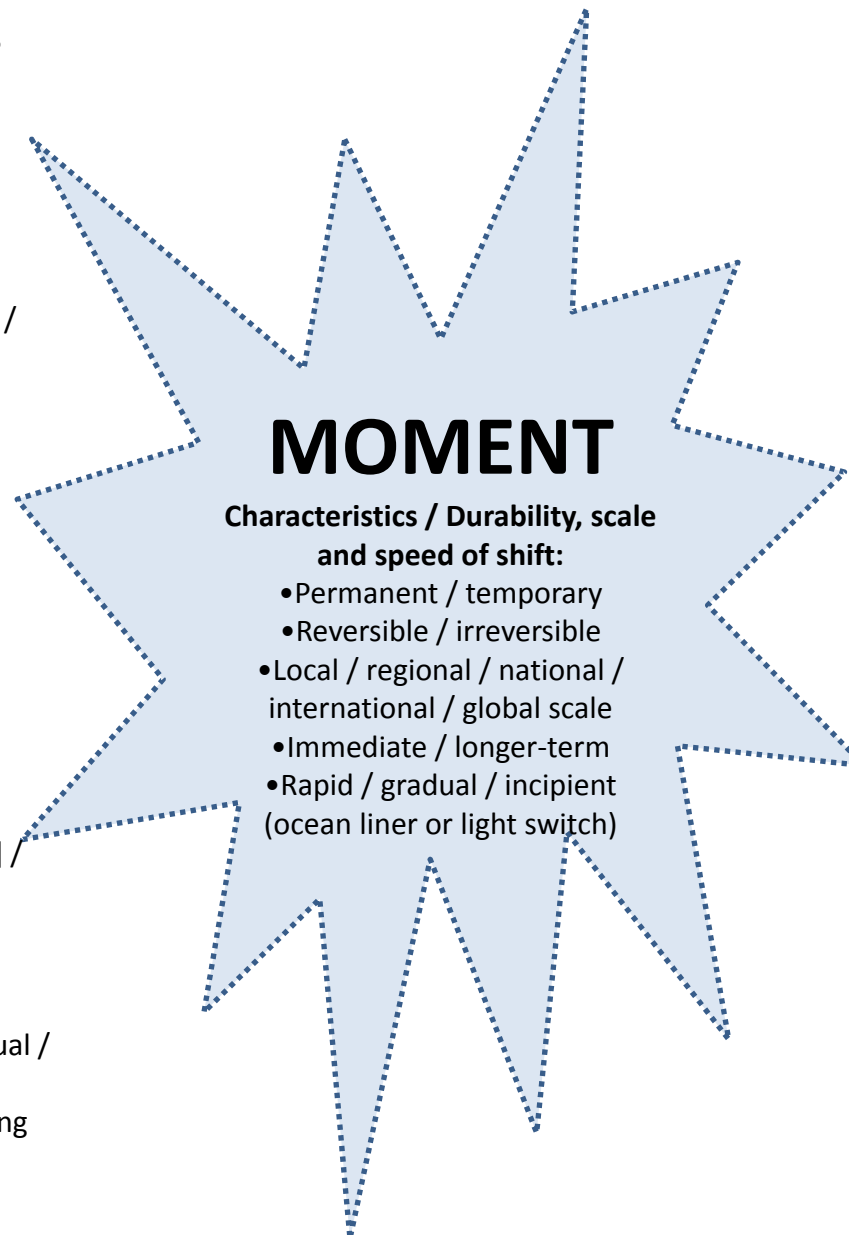
TRIGGER DISCOURSES >

Spontaneous:

- Critical shocks (Environmental, economic [fiscal], physical, regulatory)
- External, internal; endogenous / exogenous
- Local / regional / national / international / global scale
- Structural / anthropogenic
- Catalytic / incapacitating (debilitating)

Selective:

- Structural / anthropogenic
- Interventionist, incidental / unintentional
- Discursive / non-discursive
- Regulatory / fiscal [investment] / resource-driven
- Ad-hoc / strategic
- External, internal
- Endogenous / exogenous
- Impetus: Institutional / individual / community-led
- Local context-bound / globalising
- Consensus-based / imposed



> IMPACT DISCOURSES

Effects / Outcomes / Responses / Reactions

Processes:

- Stabilising / destabilising post-moment effects
- Shaping of single path / multiple paths in parallel

Upgrading / Up-scaling:

- Renewal
- Recuperation (selective) of pre-lock-in elements
- Reinforcement
- Extension
- Reversal
- Metamorphosis/transition

Conversion:

- Redevelopment
- Metamorphosis
- Restructuring

Downgrading / downscaling:

- Creative destruction (“slash and burn”, more radical)
- Dissolution (more incremental)
- Abandonment/collapse
- Suspension

7 Moments: A transferable framework?

Basic principle - acknowledges the inherent 'urbanising' nature of most tourism development

Fits well with recent developments in urban social geography – Cultural Political Economy – CPE (Sum & Jessop, 2013) – and evolutionary economic geography – EEG (c.f. Boschma & Martin, 2010)

An heuristic, holistic device - 'moments' as complex, context-bound processes that include several marked elements therein: pre- and post-scapes, triggers and impacts.

Necessarily grounded in contextual environments; affected by the local historical and geographical context (scapes and flows)

TRANSFERABILITY - could this be applied to any type of place and any industrial sector – flexible, adaptable and with potential as a strategic planning tool? **What about in well-documented, 'paradigmatic' cases?**

8 Discourses of the 'moment'; Cozumel

Cozumel (2013)

City: San Miguel

Declining hotel occupancy rates (currently around 46%)

Tourism losses since 2009 in all senses

Mayan heritage presence (often packaged with dive activities aimed at cruise visitors)



Arrivals (2013)

2.75M cruise passengers /
894 cruiseships
220,000 air passengers /
3,690 flights
(Plus four commercial ferry operations)

Diving (2013)

Part of Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System
Around 30 reef sites – National Park,
License required everywhere
Over 100 dive shop operations

9 Cozumel's key (tourism-related) moments

Selective:

- Military airstrip shares access with commercial airliners
- Commercial ferry services begin (now 2 piers)
- Successive opening of three international cruise piers in 1980, 1997, **2002** (a fourth under discussion), the second over a key reef site
- Reef designation as national park 1996 / Ramsar Site 2005
- First dive operators set up
- All-out promotion of cruise tourism and related products

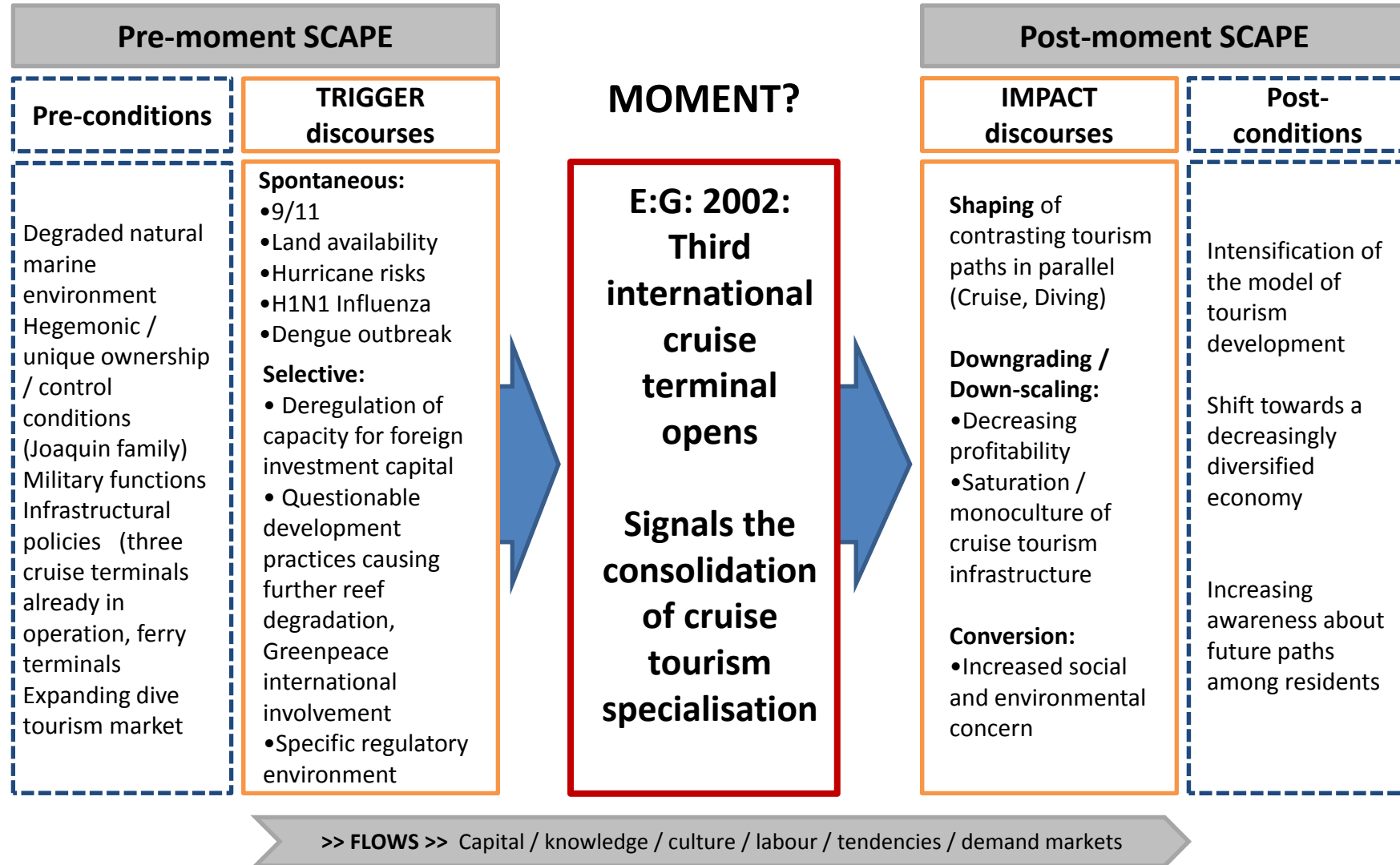
Spontaneous:

- Hurricanes Wilma, Gilbert, others
- 9/11
- H1N1 influenza
- Global financial crisis post-2009
- Greenpeace intervention and international media storm surrounding second pier / Paradise Reef damage, Jean Michel Cousteau / Coral Alliance involved
- First guidebooks published (Pavía, 1938)
- Diving fame kicks off with an underwater film on Cozumel by René Cardona (Un Mundo Nuevo) – translated into English in 1958

Urban myths!

- Jacques Cousteau documentary (non-existent!) in 1950s

10 Discourses of the 'moment'; Cozumel




11 Conclusions

A transferable framework? Beyond the TALC: focus on analysing the evolving **qualities of places living with tourism** (Équipe MIT, 2002) instead of the analysis of **tourism in places** (e.g. Butler, 1980; Plog, 1973)

Understanding **what** might trigger key moments in the evolutionary path shaping of places, as well as the associated **'how, why, when and where'** of destination change – upgrading, conversion, downgrading outcomes... May give more perspective for strategic planning and management

Moving beyond models based on tourism performance indicators, allowing a more holistic focus on positive path shaping as well as on negative, critical shocks in tourism-related paths

Recognises the key role of significant moments in path-shaping and how past events and decisions affect the response to and influence of future key moments – potentially powerful as a combined urban and regional / tourism planning perspective.



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Thanks for your attention

Julie Wilson (Julie.Wilson@urv.cat)

Salvador Anton Clavé (Salvador.Anton@urv.cat)

Cinta Sanz Ibañez (Cinta.Sanzi@urv.cat)

www.globaltur.org

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