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**Dr. Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez**

Project Researcher

Rovira I Virgili University, Catalonia, Spain.

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**Emerging Scholar Profile**

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Dr. Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez is an early career project researcher in tourism at the Research Group on Territorial Analysis and Tourism Studies (GRATET) – Department of Geography, Rovira i Virgili University, Catalonia. She received her Ph.D. in Tourism and Leisure (cum laude) in 2017 from the Rovira i Virgili University, where she previously obtained a M.Sc. (Hons) in Tourism Management and Planning and a B.S. (Hons) in Tourism.

Her doctoral research, supervised by Prof. Salvador Anton Clavé, was titled “The Evolution of Destinations. An Evolutionary and Relational Economic Geography Approach”<sup>1</sup>The main objective of her Ph.D. thesis was to understand the mechanisms underlying the changes occurring throughout the evolutionary trajectory of tourism destinations, putting attention to the dynamics of place instead of the evolution of tourism activity, one of the prevalent discussions around traditional evolutionary models. To achieve this, it developed an analytical model drawing inspiration on contemporary advances in economic geography – i.e., evolutionary economic geography (EEG) and relational economic geography (REG). The integrated EEG-REG approach took into consideration that multiple interdependent forces produce distinctive evolutionary trajectories depending on the specificities of the destination in terms of contextuality, human agency and path dependence. In so doing, the model addressed destination evolution processes from a non-linear and non-deterministic lens, while embracing the complexity of destination evolution processes and

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<sup>1</sup> The development of Dr. Cinta Sanz-Ibáñez PhD thesis was financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (FPU research grant AP2010-2623) and was part of the projects GLOBALTUR (CSO2011-23004/GEOG) and MOVETUR (CSO2014-51785-R) funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

acknowledging the increasing economic, urban and residential functions acquired by consolidated tourism destinations.

Cinta has presented and discussed her research at several international conferences including Annual Meetings of the American Association of Geographers (AAG), Nordic Symposiums in Tourism and Hospitality Research, Regional Studies Association (RSA) and International Geographical Union (IGU) sponsored workshops, and the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Economic Geography. Her networking has also been enriched after having the pleasure of doing research stays at Aalborg University (Denmark) and at the University of Girona (Catalonia). Her work has been published in journals including *Tourism Geographies* and *Annals of Tourism Research*, and as a *Routledge* book chapter. She was extremely honoured to receive the AECIT award (Spanish Association of Scientists Experts in Tourism) for the best scientific article in tourism 2015 with the article “The Evolution of Destinations: towards an evolutionary and relational economic geography approach” published in the journal *Tourism Geographies*. Cinta was invited to act as a reviewer for academic journals including *Tourism Geographies*, *the Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, and *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec*. She was also engaged in the elaboration of teaching materials on tourism destination's governance for the Master's Degree in Tourism, Sustainability, and ICT offered by the Open University of Catalonia (UOC).

In her role as an active researcher in the tourism field, Cinta plans, on the one hand, to strengthen her expertise on the evolutionary and relational economic geographies of tourism as a means to lead to a more effective analysis of the complex dynamics influencing how and why destinations evolve over time. By further developing and applying these approaches, she strongly believes that valuable inputs and tools for the definition of policies promoting the competitiveness and sustainability of tourism destinations can be provided. On the other hand, she will continue to work towards positioning the analysis of tourism destinations at the intersections of contemporary advances in mainstream economic geography, a cause that has long been defended by scholars in the tourism geography field.

In parallel to her research activities, Cinta is currently a Project Manager of the Erasmus Mundus Master on Wine Tourism Innovation (WINTOUR). WINTOUR is a joint programme funded by the European Union in the framework of the Erasmus+ project that is coordinated by Rovira i Virgili University in collaboration with *Université de Bordeaux* and *Universidade*

*do Porto*. In this position, she carries out coordination and management tasks for the proper implementation and monitoring of the programme since its inception in 2015 and provides individual attention and guidance to the students (more than 90% international). Being actively involved in these endeavours represents an opportunity to both gain deep knowledge of how higher education institutions are administered internally and be given the priceless opportunity to get to know highly talented and motivated individuals from all around the globe.

Before pursuing a career in academia and in parallel to her university training, Cinta spent close to 7 years acquiring professional experience in the tourism sector, working in the travel distribution and transport industry, as intern in public administrations responsible for the management and promotion of tourism in the south of Catalonia, and participating in the development and management of projects and strategic plans for the sustainable development of tourism in local destinations as a consultant and junior researcher. This much rewarding first-hand experience gave her the chance to acquire a transversal view of the sector's complex nature and to meet a number of stakeholders, which, in turn, motivated Cinta to orientate her career as a researcher with the purpose of giving them clues for the prosperous and sustainable development of tourism.

In her free time, Cinta enjoys looking for new recipes to cook and bake for her beloved ones, planning travels abroad every now and then, and watching her favourite TV series.