

Interpath relations and the triggering of wine-tourism development

Abstract

The Margaret River region (Western Australia) is a popular international tourism destination. Since its emergence in the late 19th century, tourism in the Margaret River region (MRR) has interacted with a number of regional industries including timber, dairy, and wine. These interactions have changed from ‘supportive’ to ‘competing’ reflecting various changes in the market and the availability of common local assets such as forest, land, and public funding. While timber and dairy had an important influence on the evolution of tourism in the region, it was the emergence of wine that shifted tourism the most.

Using selected concepts of evolutionary economic geography (EEG), mainly path-dependence, path-reformation, interpath relations, and triggering events, this paper demonstrates how tourism has interacted with different other industries and how these interactions have shaped the MRR as a wine-tourist destination. The paper shows how two related triggering events contributed to the emergence of wine-tourism as a new path in the region – a process referred to as ‘path-blending’. In this respect, the paper provides empirical evidence that triggering events can result in multiple new paths and can also significantly shape the relations between new and existing regional paths. As such, the paper responds to the call for breaking away with the ‘single-path view’ in research on industrial evolution, and for more attention to the various relations between tourism and other sectors within a tourist destination.

Keywords

Triggering events, wine-tourism, path-dependence, path-creation, path-dissolution, interpath relations, path-reformation, path-expansion, path-blending, Margaret River region

Introduction

As a global phenomenon, tourism promotes the transformation of regions into places attractive to tourists, i.e. tourist destinations (Saarinen, 2004). Certainly, the transformation of tourist destinations has social, cultural, economic, and environmental regional implications (Brouder et al., 2016; L'equipe MIT, 2002). As such, attention must be paid to how destinations transform over time and the mechanisms behind that transformation (Sanz-Ibáñez and Anton Clavé, 2014). To enhance the general understanding of how and why such transformation (or, shall we say, evolution?) occurs has been a key objective of multiple studies using various theoretical lenses – from Butler's (1980) tourism area life cycle (TALC) model to the recent adoption and popularisation of evolutionary economic geography (EEG) (Brouder, 2014a, 2014b; Brouder and Eriksson, 2013a). Indeed, various EEG concepts – mainly those related to path-dependence – have secured a strong place in the analysis of how tourist destinations evolve (e.g. Bramwell and Cox, 2009; Brouder and Eriksson, 2013b; Gill and Williams, 2014; Halkier and James, 2017; Ma and Hassink, 2014; Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2017). Yet, most empirical studies have neglected the interactions between tourism's development and other economic paths within a region (see Breul et al., 2021; Stihl, 2022 for exceptions).

More recently, one of the aims of EEG *inter alia* has been to understand how emerging industries interact with pre-existing industries in the same region (Frangenheim et al., 2020; Hassink et al., 2019). While research on those interactions is still incipient, early studies have made relevant insights into competitive and synergic interpath relationships between emerging and preexisting paths (Frangenheim et al., 2020; Hassink et al., 2019), and the influence of place-specific factors on interpath relations (Frangenheim, 2022). Building on these developments, Breul et al. (2021) and Stihl (2022) address the emergence of tourism as a regional economic path and how it interacts with other preexisting sectors such as agriculture and mining. Building upon these studies, this paper aims to respond to the question what have been the interpath relations between tourism and other regional industries in the Margaret River region (MRR) since its emergence as a tourist destination in the late 19th century?

Drawing from semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis, this paper adopts EEG (particularly the notions of path-dependence, path-creation, path-expansion, and interpath

relations), to analyse the evolution of the MRR (Western Australia) from a cave-focused destination to a popular international wine-tourism destination. Building on Frangenheim et al.'s (2020) and Breul et al.'s (2021) frameworks, this paper identifies both competitive and synergic relationships between tourism and other regional industries (e.g. timber, dairy, and wine), discusses the influence of triggering events on the development of wine-tourism, and opens the debate about the long-term effects of path-expansion. It is shown that the close and continuous interaction between tourism and the wine industry in the Margaret River region has generated a distinctive, place-specific wine-tourism path that substantially differs from the pre-existing tourism and wine industries. The paper refers to this particular process as *path-blending*. In addition to path-blending as a theoretical contribution to the literature on interpath relations, the paper also suggest that path-dissolution has been an overlooked factor in Frangenheim et al.'s (2020) and Breul et al.'s (2021) frameworks.

The remainder of this paper consists of six sections. The following two sections discuss the main body of theory that this paper utilises. While the first section presents relevant EEG concepts, including interpath relations, the second one discusses the concept of triggering events and their role in the evolution of tourist destinations. In order to set the scene, the following section briefly introduces the MRR. The next section explains our methodology. The penultimate section presents the research findings and discusses their relevance and implications. The final section offers conclusions.

Interpath relations in tourist destinations

The notion of interpath relations is one of the most recent developments within the EEG paradigm (Breul et al., 2021; Frangenheim et al., 2020; Hassink et al., 2019). Hence, before addressing this concept, this section will briefly discuss all key EEG concepts that are relevant for the understanding of interpath relations.

Path-dependence, path-creation, and path-dissolution have been extensively analysed in EEG studies (e.g. Boschma and Frenken, 2006; Martin, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2012; Schienstock, 2007). Their applicability to the analysis of tourist destinations has also been recognised (Brouder, 2014b; Brouder and Eriksson, 2013a). A useful approach to integrate these concepts is Martin and Sunley's (2006, p. 408) "path-as-process" approach (see also Benner, 2022; Martin, 2010), which suggests that path-dependence, path-creation, and path-dissolution are

often part of the same continuum where actors strive to initiate new regional path trajectories (for instance through diversification) in order to avoid being locked-in to configurations that are not optimal for their region's future. Building on this view, Martin (2010) proposed a path-dependence model of local industrial evolution wherein four phases are distinguished: preformation, path-creation, path-development, and path-dependence, with two possible scenarios of path-dependence – one leading to stasis (rigidification) or even decline (path-dissolution), and one fostering dynamic changes leading to path-renewal or new path-creation. Recognising that the evolution of a tourism destination is “a dynamic open path-dependent process by which products, sectors, and institutions co-evolve along unfolding trajectories”, Ma and Hassink (2013, p. 98) applied Martin's (2010) model to tourism destination evolution, using the example of Gold Coast in Australia (see also Ma and Hassink, 2014, for the case of Guilin, China). As such, Ma and Hassink's (2013) model complements Butler's (1980) TALC theory by drawing more attention to the reasons behind the emergence or decline of tourism destinations.

While this model convincingly introduces the key notions of EEG – particularly path-dependence – into the evolution of tourist destinations, it should be also recognised that tourism, as other industries, does not emerge in isolation, but instead it interacts with other sectors within a region (Brouder et al., 2016). As Martin and Sunley (2006) observed, each region is a complex configuration of firms, industries, and technologies, and each individual component may be following its own path-dependent trajectory. If sectors interact with each other and develop linkages (which is a fairly common scenario in a regional context), the region may exhibit a degree of ‘multiple related path-dependence’ (Martin and Sunley, 2006). Furthermore, if such linkages make two sectors complementary to each other and help them grow in a mutually-reinforcing way, such a condition is referred to as ‘path-interdependence’ (Martin and Sunley, 2012, 2006). Building on the latter, concepts such as related and unrelated variety have emerged to conceptualise the relations between regional industries (Frenken et al., 2007; Neffke et al., 2011). Both concepts aim to explain the emergence, diversification, and exit of regional industries based on their technological and skill relatedness with preexisting industries (Hassink, 2010; Neffke et al., 2011). However, due to the fact that both concepts predominantly focus on endogenous factors at the firm level, they fall short of addressing path interactions (Frangenheim et al., 2020; Hassink et al., 2019).

As a result, Hassink et al. (2019) proposed a fine-grain approach to interpath relations that considers both supportive and competing relationships between different paths. For instance, industries (whether emerging or established) may need to compete for scarce regional resources (e.g. skilled labour, private capital, or governmental support) and the relations between them may be therefore antagonistic, rather than supportive, as often portrayed. Building on this, Frangenheim et al. (2020) and Breul et al. (2021) developed two frameworks that are pertinent to this paper. Frangenheim et al. (2020) focused on interpath relations between emerging regional paths in terms of access to markets and regional assets (e.g. knowledge, place-based values, labour, capital), showing that emerging industries may depend on similar or different markets, or similar or different (abundant or scarce) assets. This can lead to strong or weak interpath relations which can evolve over time due to changes in the industrial paths of the respective sectors, the availability of assets, or changing market dynamics (Frangenheim et al., 2020).

Breul et al. (2021), in turn, paid attention to the influence that emerging paths can have on established ones. The influence of emerging paths on preexisting sectors can result in different types of path-reformation (i.e. negative path-development, path-expansion, and path-renewal) that can occur simultaneously (Breul et al., 2021). Negative path-development refers to the decline of an existing path due to the formation of a new one (e.g. competition for the same scarce resources). Path-expansion occurs when the formation of a new path leads to positive multiplier effects on the existing paths (e.g. creation of a complementary market). Path-renewal refers to the positive impact on the existing path due to the introduction of new related assets into the region and the formation of a new path (e.g. an emergence of a new related technology in the region). Finally, Breul et al. (2021) also indicated that the formation of a new path may not influence the existing paths (no reformation). Table 1 presents a summary of both frameworks. Importantly, all these concepts can be easily applied to tourism. For instance, Stihl (2022) demonstrated how the emerging tourism path in Kiruna (Sweden) developed a (temporarily) competitive relationship with the established mining sector to the benefit of the local municipality. Indeed the competition for local labour triggered increasing investments on the region from both sectors. Breul et al. (2021), in turn, showed how an emerging tourism path triggered parallel reformation process in the Zambezi region (Namibia). On the one hand tourism brought new knowledge and investment to, thus initiating path-expansion and path-renewal in the

established agricultural sector. Whereas, on the other hand, negative path-development occurred as agriculture and tourism competed for the same scarce resource (land).

Table 1. Types of regional path-reformation as a result of emerging paths. *Source: Authors based on Frangenheim et al., 2020; Breul et al., 2021.*

		Market	Assets
Type of path-reformation	Path-renewal	Different*	Related
	Path-expansion	Complementary	Related
	Negative path-development	Same	Same but scarce
	No reformation	Different	Different
Same and abundant		Different	

*Inferred from Breul et al. (2021)

Finally, it is important to reflect on the role of agency of firms and non-firm actors (e.g. policy-makers or universities) in shaping interpath relations, (Boschma, 2017; Frangenheim et al., 2020; Stihl, 2022; Tripl et al., 2018). For instance, actors from industries supplying different markets but relying on the same abundant or scarce assets can mobilise their actions in three different ways: intensify the competition with the other path (such as through selective lobbies), establish supportive relations with the other path (such as by initiating collaborative actions), or attempt to dissolve the interaction with the other path (such as by means of relocating to a different region or creating new assets) (Frangenheim et al., 2020). While agency indeed plays a pivotal role in these processes, this paper suggests that interpath relations can also be influenced by various triggering events. These types of events are addressed in the next section.

Triggering events and tourism

Although EEG-informed studies have traditionally paid more attention to the role of geographically and historically embedded factors (e.g. pre-existing conditions, institutions or the agency of actors) in shaping regional paths, rather than those related to chance such as historical events or unintended consequences of agents' actions that can only be noticed *ex post* (Garud and Karnøe, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2006; Sydow et al., 2012), the concept of triggering events has recently gained much more prominence in the EEG literature.

Triggering events, far from being be small and random (see David, 1985), are defined as

decisive and powerful incidents and therefore capable of inducing single or multiple new paths of growth (Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017; Sydow et al., 2012).

As such, while not preponderant, the concept of triggering events has also found a place in research on the evolution of tourist destinations. For instance, Laws and Prideaux (2006, p. 6) define triggering events as “the origin of crisis”, whether produced by humans or natural forces. In this respect, triggering events are conceptualised as unexpected natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and global economic crises (Laws and Prideaux, 2006; Ritchie et al., 2014). However, although this definition has a negative connotation, triggering events can also have an immediate positive transformative impact on a destination (Baggio and Sainaghi, 2011), allowing or contributing to the emergence of new tourism-related paths. For instance, Ma and Hassink’s (2014, 2013) tourist destination evolution model assumes that new paths of tourism development are shaped both by triggering events and initial conditions such as preexisting natural or cultural resources. In their analysis of the Guilin tourist destination endogenous triggering events were found to contribute to the internationalisation of the place. In turn, Gill and Williams (2016) identified exogenous triggering events as important catalysts for change, and therefore, as enablers of path-creation. Their study infers that triggering events may require an enabling context to stimulate a change in the destination. Closely related to triggering events is Butler’s (2014) notion of *triggers*. These triggers (such as political change, sudden resource shortages and economic unrest) have the potential to shift the destination towards a new path of development. More recent developments concerning triggering events can be found in the *moments approach* (Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017). This approach proposes that triggering events are not necessarily spontaneous (Laws and Prideaux, 2006; Ritchie et al., 2014), but could also be selective in nature (Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017). In other words, intentional decisions of key stakeholders such as endogenous regulatory policies or exogenous investment strategies can also be conceptualised as triggering events.

Overall, these studies suggest that triggering events, whether endogenous or exogenous or whether spontaneous or selective, can foster shifts in tourist destinations (either positive or negative) if the existing conditions facilitate them. Nonetheless, triggering events might not be noticed when they occur. While they may be seen as small, unrelated, and insignificant when they happen, their true effects may only be noticed once they are “rationalised by hindsight” (i.e. in retrospective) (Baggio and Sainaghi, 2011, p. 844) by actors engaged with the path or by external observers (Sydow et al., 2012).

Further to the discussion of interpath relations, it is pertinent to analyse the role and nature of triggering events in the interactions between tourism and other industries. As the example of the MRR below shows, triggering events in tourism destinations might not necessarily be related to tourism, but, instead, they can originate from unrelated industries. Before this argument is developed further, the next section introduces the area of study in more detail.

The Margaret River region as a tourist destination

The Margaret River region (MRR) is a popular tourist destination that encompasses two non-metropolitan local government areas – The City of Busselton and The Shire of Augusta Margaret River (see Figure 1). As such, it overlaps with the so-called Margaret River wine region. The MRR lies 250 km south of Perth (approximately 3 hours by car) in the southwestern corner of Western Australia (WA) and has a population of 50,875 people according to the last census data (ABS, 2016). The region is known for its scenic natural environment (beaches, coastal plains, large eucalyptus forests, geological formations along the coast) and important archaeological sites of Wardandi Noongar (the traditional custodians whose Country includes the MRR) and European settlements, both of which account for the region's cultural heritage (Jones et al., 2015, 2010; Sanders, 2006).

Figure 1. The Margaret River region in Western Australia. *Source: Authors.*



In the late 20th century the MRR also became an attractive destination for various new residents (Sanders, 2006). The region witnessed an impressive increase in population from 13,049 in 1981 to 31,911 in 2001, and it has since maintained a steady demographic growth (Sanders, 2006). Tourism in the MRR plays an important role as a regional economic driver and a source of direct and indirect employment for around 20% of the region’s population (MRBTA, 2019). It suffices to say, in 2018-2019 the MRR received 2.89 million domestic and international visitors (1.30 million day-trippers and 1.59 million overnight visitors). In

turn, the Margaret River wine region, which accounts for 900 cellar doors, is one of the main high-quality wine exporters in Australia. As such, it is the most visited wine region in Australia for domestic travellers and one of the top three Australian wine regions for international visitors (MRWIA, 2020).

Methodology

The paper uses a qualitative single case study methodology (Yin, 2003) to follow the evolution of tourism in the MRR since the late 19th century, address its interactions with other regional industries, and identify the events that triggered the rise of wine-tourism. The case study utilised two methods of data collection: documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews. The former encompassed various publicly available sources including newspaper and magazine articles, institutional reports, and websites of tourism-related institutions and firms dating back to 1848 (only fourteen years after the first settlement in the MRR) (see Perth Gazette, 1848). The main databases included the National Library of Australia, ProQuest database, and Factiva, with the following searching codes used: 'tourism', 'timber', 'dairy', 'caves', 'wine', 'wine-tourism', 'Margaret River', and 'Busselton'. All the documents were organised chronologically.

The second method encompassed 51 semi-structured interviews (with 54 tourism stakeholders within and outside the MRR) that were conducted online between February 2021 and June 2021, except for one that took place in February 2022 (Table 2). At the initial stage, respondents were selected according to the rule of purposive sampling (i.e. based on their historical knowledge of and professional involvement in the local tourism industry). However, at a later stage, the project also relied on the initial respondents' recommendations, according to the snowballing rule (Valentine, 2005). Importantly, most of the respondents have resided in the MRR since the 1970s and have witnessed the MRR's evolution since then.

Table 2. List of interviewees. *Source: Authors.*

Type of interviewee	Interviewee code	Number of interviewees
Independent academic experts	1 to 4	4
Representatives of non-for-profit organisations	5 to 7	3
Representatives of destination marketing organisations	8 and 9	2
Representatives of the UNWTO Australia's Southwest Tourism Observatory	10 and 11	2
Representative of an ecotourism certification organisation	12	1
Representatives of local industrial organisations	13 and 14	2
Representatives of community organisations	15 to 25	11
Federal authorities	26 to 28	3
WA authorities	29 to 36	8
Local authorities	37 and 38	2
Representatives of tourism-related businesses	40 to 54	16

Interview questions focused on the events that shaped the MRR as a tourist destination in order to identify triggering events following Sydow's (2012) methodology (see also Sydow et al., 2018), and on the recent interrelations between the wine and tourism industries in the destination. All interviews were transcribed and coded in NVivo, using pre-established codes: triggering events, historical events, tourism drivers, and tourism challenges. The last two codes provided insights into the strong relationships between the wine and tourism industries.

From caves to wine: triggering wine-tourism in the Margaret River region

Tourism emerged in the MRR in the late 19th century and from the very beginning it developed an interaction with the timber industry that had been established previously (Sanders, 1999). Decades later, during the post-WWI and post-WWII periods, tourism interacted with the dairy industry. When the latter was declining in the 1960s, the wine industry emerged and soon began to interact with tourism giving rise to the popular wine-tourism destination which the MRR is today. This section is divided into three subsections, each of which addresses the interactions between tourism and one of the other industries separately in chronological order.

Tourism and timber (late 19th century – 1910s)

According to Sanders (2006), between the end of the 19th Century and the early 20th century tourism in the MRR was rather insignificant as it relied mostly on 'visiting friends and relatives' (VFR). The situation started changing with the discovery of caves under the surrounding forests (Rundle, 1996; Sanders, 1999). The caves received attention from locals and soon became an important tourism driver. For instance, as Battye (1912, p. 5) described it, "those marvellous jewel houses, the southwest caves, are our [WA's] glory and pride".

While caves played a central role in the MRR, the natural landscape, including tall native forests, beaches, and wildlife, also contributed to tourism development in the region, as acknowledged by several local newspapers of that time (see e.g. Truth, 1916). As interviewee 11 mentioned:

[The caves] were the starting point of the tourism in the region, and it is still part of the tourism attractions today. [They] have lost their leading role they had more than one hundred years ago (...) they are not that crucial anymore.

(Interview, February 2021)

However, tourism was not the only industry in the MRR. The dominant industry, established by European settlers in the 1850s, was timber (Sanders, 1999). Settler colonies held the belief that the resources in the territory were unlimited (frontier ideology); hence, extractive industries such as timber grew without control for decades (a path that would lead to its dissolution in the 1910s as profitable forests became scarce) (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2013). During its formation, tourism benefited from the timber-related road network and the increased number of business travellers. However, as the timber industry grew, the damage to caves and surrounding native forests (Northam Advertiser, 1900) outweighed the benefits. As a result, the WA government established a reserve of 6600 ha to allow the completion of a cave inventory (Rundle, 1996), and created a cave conservation committee in 1900 (Caves Board, 1910). The reserve sowed the seeds for the creation of the Leeuwin-Naturalist national park in the 1970s (Rundle, 1996; Sanders, 1999, 2006).

In this period, tourism emerged in the context of settler colonialism where timber was a dominant industry. During the development of the timber industry interpath relations between timber and tourism evolved from neutral to competitive – a rather expected pattern according to Frangenheim et al. (2020). Clearly, timber and tourism had different markets and could appear unrelated at first sight. However, as demonstrated by mining and tourism in Sweden (Stihl, 2022), interpath relations between tourism and extractive industries are not impossible. In this particular period, tourism in the MRR directly benefited from the assets (roads and routines) created by the timber industry that remained unaffected by tourism for a few decades. This relationship fell into the ‘no reformation’ category from Breul et al.’s (2021) framework. However, as caves became an iconic element of the MRR and, importantly, of WA, they had to be protected by the government from the continuous growth of the timber industry and the extraction of surrounding forests through conservation policies. This led to

competition for the same resource (forests) that over time became scarce or endangered. However, distributed agency among non-firm actors (e.g. WA government) neutralised and mitigated this competition, thus preventing a negative path-development of either tourism or timber. While the conservation policies did not attempt to affect the timber industry, it is possible to infer that the establishment of cave reserves eventually contributed to its dissolution in the MRR. This situation is similar to the Zambezi region (Namibia) where zoning policies in the late 1990s led to competitive interpath relations between agriculture and tourism affecting the development of the former (Breul et al., 2021). Importantly, it is possible to add to Breul et al.'s framework (2021) that emerging industries which do not share markets with established ones, but rely on the same scarce assets, can foster a negative path-development of the preexisting industry.

Tourism, dairy, and wine (1920s – 1960s)

Despite the dissolution of the timber industry, tourism steadily continued to develop based on the increasing popularity of caves and forests. For instance, public-led accommodation, transport networks, and later also reservation systems were developed to bring visitors to the MRR, mainly from Perth (The West Australian, 1934). The region also soon became a favourite destination for honeymooners (Sanders, 1999). Nonetheless, tourism was affected by subsequent global events such as the Great War (WWI) and WWII (Sanders, 2006). In order to promote economic recovery in the region after both wars, the WA government carried out two important attempts to establish the dairy industry on the relatively cleared land left behind by the timber industry (Jones et al., 2015; Sanders, 2006). The first one (Group Settlement Scheme) took place between 1921 and 1930 and it brought many British families to establish dairy farming and agriculture. This scheme failed due to a lack of funding, resources, and experience amongst the farmers (Jones and Jones, 2020; Sanders, 2006). The second scheme, known as the War Service Land Settlement (1945-1960), aimed to provide cleared land to returned WWII soldiers to help them establish dairy farming. While this scheme suffered from similar problems as the previous one, it was also severely influenced by the increasing cost of labour and land related to the post-WWII economic boom. As a result, the dairy industry started gradually relocating to different regions, leaving behind hectares of affordable land and a sealed road network established through government support (Barrett, 1965; Sanders, 2006).

The available land, improved accessibility, and a period of economic growth facilitated the arrival of new people and industries to the region. For instance, visitors, mainly affluent people of the post-war youth culture, would drive from Perth for short stays or camping and ‘discover’ the region’s surfing potential (McDonald-Lee, 2016). In the next two decades, those surfers as well as members of the countercultural movement (hippies) moved to permanent places near surf beaches, taking advantage of the affordable old properties left behind by the post-war settlements related to dairy (Jones et al., 2019; Nicholls, 1966; Sanders, 2006). There was a noticeable difference between new residents and the remaining dairy farmers in the region. Interviewee 40 commented:

[S]urfers started coming to Margaret River intensively in the 70s. People (...) were surfing there in the 60s and 70s (...) Historically, there was a bit of a clash of cultures between the surfers who tended to be a little bit alternative in their approach to the lifestyle on one hand, and then the existing dairy farmers on the other who (...) have been there for a long time (...). And then there was the orange movement, which was sort of associated with free love and that sort of things and that upset quite a lot of the locals and the more conventional moralities.

(Interview, April 2021)

During this period, dairy was an emerging industry whereas tourism was an established industry based on the growing popularity of the local caves. Both industries initially developed in an unrelated manner as their markets were different and they also utilised different kinds of land. While tourism relied on the protected caves and surrounding forests, dairy relied on farming areas and government regulation of the market for dairy products. However, government support for the dairy industry also proved to have a positive influence on existing tourism as the road network was improved and the accessibility of the region significantly increased. In other words, public investment for and by the dairy industry contributed to tourism’s path-renewal, providing another example of how interpath relations evolve (Frangenheim et al., 2020). While Breul et al. (2021) indicate that path-renewal is more likely to happen between related industries, the positive impact of the dairy industry on tourism in the MRR demonstrates that it could also occur between unrelated industries which share infrastructure such as a road network in this case. Nonetheless, tourism’s path-renewal became most evident after the dairy industry’s path-dissolution. This was due to the emergence of new markets (initially surfers) and new assets (coastal towns) that revitalised the tourism industry, which by that time had only been based on natural resources (the caves).

This brings up an important question about the impact of industries exiting a region on other sectors.

Initially, the interpath relation between dairy and tourism was neutral as they neither competed for assets or markets, nor actively supported each other. However, the relation between these two sectors was *passively supportive*. While in a different context the two industries might compete for the same scarce assets, which might result in a negative path-development of one of those industries (see Breul et al., 2021), the path-dissolution of the dairy industry turned a scarce asset (i.e. cleared land) into an abundant one that was subsequently taken advantage of by both the developing tourism industry and a completely new sector in the MRR – the wine industry.

The wine industry is one of the most important industries that emerged in this period after the dissolution of the dairy industry. Its development resulted from four contingent events: an increasing national demand for European-style wine; decreasing productivity of vineyards in the Swan Valley in Perth (WA); wine-related lobby groups; and the recommendations made by Dr Olmo (a visiting viticulturalist with the WA Vine Fruits Research Trust) (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017), although the latter did not include the MRR as a potential wine region due to its rainfall patterns. However, in 1966 Dr Gladstone, a WA government agronomist, produced a report describing the potential of the MRR based on the local knowledge he had due to his frequent trips to the region (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017). Following the report, he was invited by local farmers who were looking to diversify as dairy farming had already started declining (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017; Sanders, 2006; Thompson, 2015). Following Gladstone's visit, the first vines were planted in 1967 and a new path in the region began. As described by respondent 15:

I started coming down here in the 60s, and I remember seeing Cullen Wines on caves road, but not many others (...) There were still paddocks with cows and everything. It [MRR] was a farming community. But then, all of a sudden, all the paddocks were being sold, cows were gone and vineyards everywhere.

(Interview, March 2021)

In this respect, Dr Gladstone's report proved to be an unexpected, yet very influential, event that sparked the development of a new industry in the region. While his report did not expect to trigger a whole industry, it did have a purpose. As such, it is possible to argue that his

report is an example of a selective triggering event (Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017). In this case, the agency was oriented towards taking advantage of as many existing resources as possible in order to replace an exiting industry (i.e. dairy).

Tourism and wine (1970s – 2010s)

From the very beginning, the wine industry in the MRR exhibited a strong quest for quality, which helped position local wineries among the best-ranked in Australia (Hanley, 1982). Although at the initial stage the wine industry found itself competing with tourism for governmental support and a primary role in the MRR's development (Interviewee 9), the potential for growth that both sectors identified in mutual collaboration, helped minimise the number of tensions and proved to be a promising platform for joint future initiatives. Indeed, vineyards were much more complementary to the tourism sector than dairy farms had been before and some early positive interactions between both industries gradually started to emerge. From 1978 wineries began to open tourist facilities such as galleries, restaurants, and cellar-door under winemakers initiative (Brearley, 2022). However, the most important step towards the consolidation of wine-tourism took place in 1985 when the Leeuwin Estate brought the London Philharmonic Orchestra to the region (Hoad, 1984). Since that event played a major role in showcasing the region's natural beauty, it is deemed to have gained the MRR international recognition and popularity. As Interviewee 38 indicated:

[I] believe that the icon event that still goes today is the Leeuwin Estate Winery concert (...) Up until that time [1980s], Margaret River was very well known domestically, but not so much internationally (...) The Leeuwin Estate concert, the first one (...) was a major international iconic event (...) the blending of what was probably the region's first international event (...) in a fantastic backdrop with the wineries and the forest and those sorts of things (...) There's obviously a few things that shaped the industry down there. That (...) concert was one of those.

(Interview, February 2021)

Thus, this first concert was a shifting moment in the trajectory of the wine and tourism industries. It did not only contribute to shape a new destination image, but it also helped wine-tourism become one of the main economic drivers in the MRR.

Over the 1980s, various combined wine-tourism ventures multiplied. While many vineyards directly diversified into tourism by opening chalets and restaurants on their premises, the linkages between the two industries were further strengthened by local wine tasting events,

and organised coach tours to cellar doors (Dear, 1988; Vasse Felix, 2020). The development and diversification of wine and tourism in the region were further encouraged in the 1990s by the increasing internationalisation of both sectors (Canberra Times, 1994; Foster, 1990; Macklin, 1991). Various foreign investments in tourist resorts and wine companies (Petkanas et al., 1997), accompanied by an arrival of gourmet firms related to wine (Carthew, 1999; Foster, 1992), translated into even stronger linkages between wine and tourism. As a result, wine-tourism earned recognition as a unique entity capable of promoting and shaping the development of the region even more efficiently than the preceding forms of tourism (Ozich, 1998). Such growth led to a ‘tourism boom’ in the region, turning wine-tourism into one of the region’s economic drivers from 2000 onwards (Zekulich, 2004). As Interviewee 13 described it:

[Wine and tourism] have a pretty strong relationship. I think the wine industry in the MRR has brought a lot to the region (...) If you look at the local shire maybe 50 years ago, [the MRR] was one of the lowest socioeconomic shires in Australia. The wine industry has brought a lot of investment and a lot of prosperity to the region (...) It kind of put MRR on the map. (...) It has created jobs and opportunities.

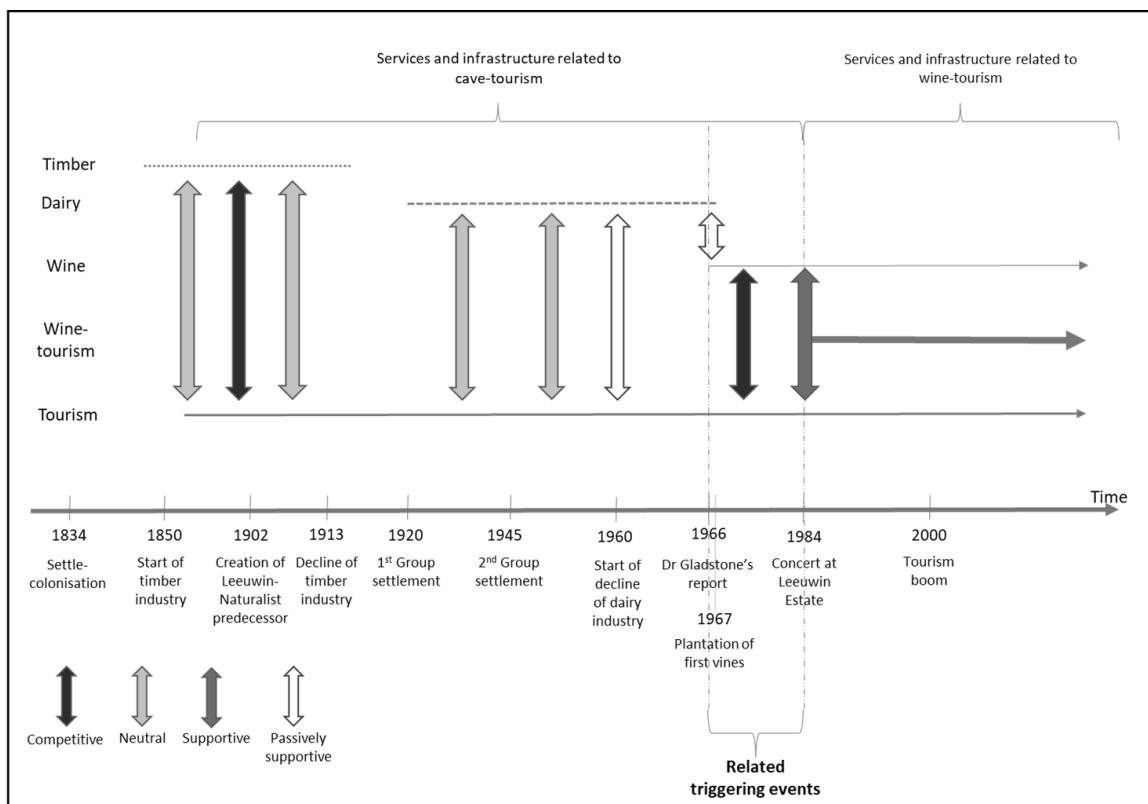
(Interview, April 2021)

Since the tourism boom, wine-tourism has strengthened and contributed to related diversification by enabling the emergence of complementary tourism products, services, and events (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2018). Simultaneously, wine-tourism has attracted further investments in luxury accommodations, most of which offered wine-related experiences (Murray, 2020; Wellington, 2003). However, not all wine firms have blended with tourism and instead have focused mainly on wine production for international markets (Interviewee 4). In turn, tourism based on surfing and the natural environment (i.e. caves) is still following its own trajectory aiming at and relying on many different markets and assets than wine-tourism.

As such, tourism and wine have an evolving interaction. They initially targeted different markets and competed for the same scarce assets (e.g. public funding, legitimisation) that could have resulted in a negative path-development of one of them. Fortunately, the agency in both industries was oriented towards creating supportive relations. While the important role of various minor developments (cellar doors, galleries) should not be overlooked, the concert organised by a wine entrepreneur was the main event triggering massive changes in

the region and encouraging a closer collaboration between tourism and wine. Although the original intention was to promote the wine market, the event brought both industries together, promoting the emergence of a complementary market for tourism and the wine industry (in particular cellar doors and restaurants in wineries). As such, this selective triggering event (see Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017) contributed to the emergence of wine-tourism which resulted in simultaneous path-expansion of the existing tourism sector and the still incipient wine industry. In this respect, Breul et al.'s (2021) framework can be expanded by a scenario in which an interpath relation is influenced not only by an established industry but also by an emerging one. Indeed, since the tourism boom, wine-tourism has begun to evolve as a single path, although still largely dependent on both tourism and wine. As such, this paper suggests that wine-tourism is a new path in the MRR that resulted from the progressive blending of key components of the tourism and wine industries (infrastructure, actors, and related industries). This paper refers to this process as *path-blending*. Figure 2 summarises the various interpath relations of tourism with other regional industries.

Figure 2. Summary of the variegated interpath relations of tourism with timber, dairy, and tourism. *Source: Authors.*



Conclusions

The paper adopted the EEG concept of interpath relations (as well as its various sister concepts) to analyse the evolution of the Margaret River region as a tourist destination. Drawing from the frameworks proposed by Frangenheim et al. (2020) and Breul et al. (2021) the paper offered empirical and theoretical developments that extend the applicability of EEG approaches to tourism evolution and the relations between tourism and other industries.

The paper related three relevant findings about the evolution of the MRR. First, by means of applying Frangenheim et al.'s (2020) framework, it evidenced the variegated interpath relations in the MRR between tourism and timber, tourism and dairy, and tourism and the wine industry. Those relationships have varied from competing to neutral and to supportive. Second, the paper reaffirmed the usefulness of distributed agency (see Boschma, 2017; Trippel et al., 2018) and interpath relations in identifying the agency of actors engaged in other, seemingly unrelated, industries as well as non-firm actors. For instance, the path-renewal of tourism was partially influenced by the relocation of the dairy industry. Third, since the paper covered the evolution of tourism in the MRR for almost 150 years, it helps recognise the long-term effects of interpath relations. For instance, the paper suggested that the competing interpath relation between timber and tourism led to the creation of conservation reserves that proved pivotal for the destination and began a pathway where extractive industries are spatially excluded from natural attractions. Consequently, this paper demonstrated that policy interventions in regional extractive industries influenced the development of tourism in the MRR.

The paper contributes to the existing theory of triggering events and interpath relations. Regarding the former, the paper showed that triggering events require an enabling context to influence a given path. Furthermore, based on the analysis above, it is possible to argue that triggering events might be dependent on previous triggering events and even take place in a logical sequence, as opposed to random chance events. Interpath relations as a framework allowed the research to go beyond the single-path view and identify the interrelations between various triggering events (i.e. the Leeuwin concert and subsequent high-profile musical events at wineries would not have been organised without the publishing of Dr Gladstone's report a few years before). In terms of interpath relations, this paper adds path-dissolution to the range of scenarios anticipated by both sectors. As noted, the path-

dissolution of the dairy industry left behind various assets that were subsequently acquired by the emerging wine industry. Finally, this paper suggests the possibility of a new form of path-development: path-blending. The continuously evolving interpath relations between tourism and wine resulted in wine-tourism as a new, integrated and consolidated regional path with a distinctive market, defined assets and actors, and a distinctive growth trajectory. As such, path-blending opens the debate on tourism evolution and the tendency of tourism to develop linkages with other industries (for instance tea-tourism, whisky-tourism, agri-tourism). Further research into path-blending will offer greater insights into how interpath relations shape destinations and the regional characteristics of tourism activities. For instance, the above analysis of tourism and wine path-blending indicates that future policies should consider the interpath relations between both industries. From this perspective, cross-sector mechanisms such as the recent eco-destination accreditation (see Shire of AMR, 2022) are appropriate as they incorporate sustainability principles into both the tourism and the emerging wine-tourism sectors.

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