

**School of Design and the Built Environment**

**Sustainability Transitions in Tourism in the Margaret River  
Region (Western Australia, Australia)**

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## Abstract

Sustainability transitions research (STR), a relatively recent sustainability approach, aims to *inter alia* understand how sociotechnical systems (a web of multiple elements that meet a particular societal function such as transportation, energy, leisure tourism) can shift from unsustainable to sustainable configurations as a result of radical shifts or innovations instead of incremental changes (Köhler et al., 2019). Research on sustainability transitions has made important progress in the last decade mainly focused on energy, transport, and urban transitions. However, it appears that tourism has been, surprisingly, an overlooked sector (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022) despite being considered, on the one hand, as one of the key sectors in which to promote sustainability transitions, and on the other hand, as one of the main contributors of greenhouse gases emissions and, consequently, of climate change (UNEP, 2011a). While sustainable tourism, a tourism aware of its impact on the three dimensions of sustainability that addresses the needs of visitors, industries, environment, and host communities (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017), clearly provides a guideline for the incorporation of sustainability into the tourism sector, a sustainability transition approach offers a systemic long-term approach to understand the key changes in the tourism sector towards sustainable tourism beyond narrow managerial and technocratic measures.

In that sense, responding to Niewiadomski and Brouder's (2022) call for bridging the gap between STR and tourism studies, this thesis adopts sustainability transition and an evolutionary approaches - the multi-level perspective (MLP) and evolutionary economic geography (EEG) to analyse the shifts towards sustainable tourism in a popular tourist destination in Western Australia (WA) – the Margaret River region (MRR). The combined use of the MLP, a framework that understands transitions as the interaction between three analytical levels – regime, niche, and landscape (Geels, 2006), and EEG, a framework that analyses how the economic landscape evolves over time using path-dependence theory, as in the case of this thesis, and other evolutionary theories (Boschma and Martin, 2007), allows this thesis to carry out a detailed analysis of the evolution of the destination since the emergence of tourism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Drawing from 51 semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis, this thesis identifies a historical transition that took place in the MRR between the 1950s and 1990s followed by a sustainability transition that started in the early 2000s and is still unfolding despite the unexpected – although apparently temporary – impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This thesis concludes that the historical transition has had relevant repercussions in the subsequent sustainability transition in the destination, and that there are complex and interlinked path-dependent and path-shaping factors that are respectively promoting and hindering the ongoing sustainability transition in the MRR. Likewise, this thesis contributes to closing the gap between research on sustainability transitions and tourism studies, expanding the scope of the MLP towards low-technology and service-based sectors such as tourism, furthering the discussion about the role of place-specific factors in the evolution of tourism destinations, and promoting the debate about the relevance of a sustainability transition approach to the pursuit of sustainable tourism.

## **Thesis Declaration**

This thesis has been composed by the candidate and the work for it has been done by the candidate. It has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree. All quotations have been distinguished by indentation or quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

Signed,

David Italo Flood Chavez

May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023



## **Acknowledgment to the Wardandi people of the Nyungar nation**

I acknowledge that the Wardandi people of the Nyungar nation as the traditional owners of the Margaret River Region where this research is located. I pay my respects to the Wardandi Elders, past, present, and emerging.

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## List of abbreviations

ASWTO	Australia's South West sustainable tourism observatory
BAU	Business-as-usual
CALM	Western Australia Department of Conservation and Land Management
CC	Climate change
DBCA	Western Australia Department of Biodiversity, Conservation, and Attractions
DMO	Destination management organisation
FIFO	Fly-in fly-out
GHG	Greenhouse gases
IPCC	Intergovernmental panel on climate change
LNNP	Leeuwin-Naturaliste national park
LGA	Local government area
MLP	Multi-level perspective
MR Pro	Margaret River Pro Surfing
MRBTA	Margaret River Busselton tourism association
MRR	Margaret River region
MRWIA	Margaret River Wine Industry association
NFP	Not-for-profit
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SNM	Strategic niche management
STR	Sustainability transitions research
TALC	Tourism area life cycle
TIS	Technological innovation systems
TM	Transition management
UN	United Nations
UN SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural organisation
UNWTO	United Nations World Travel Organisation

VESPA	Virus escapees seeking provincial Australia
VFR	Visiting friends and relatives
WA	Western Australia
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development



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Appendix 2: Example of data display table using Miles and Huberman's method

Appendix 3: Documentary analysis (list of secondary sources and meta-analysis)

Appendix 4: Participant information sheet

Appendix 5: Consent form

## Chapter 1.

### Introduction: the transition towards sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region

*Koorah (present), Nitja (past), Boordahwan (future)*  
(Wardandi Noongar language)

#### 1.1. Sustainability transitions in the Margaret River region: filling the gaps

When I began this research on the Margaret River region (MRR), my online searching revealed a set of amazing coastal and rural landscapes with a large variety of experiences around wine, surf, nature, adventure, Indigenous culture, and gastronomy (Figure 1). Those images increased my expectations about the fieldwork stage that was going to take place in the MRR between May 2020 and April 2021 (see Chapter 5). As part of the fieldwork, I had planned to visit various wine estates to taste the region's famous wines, swim at Yallingup and Hamelin Bay beaches, walk along the cliffs in Prevelly and Gracetown, take many pictures of Lake cave and Mammoth cave, and hike along the cape-to-cape route. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see chapters 3 and 8), those plans had to be postponed. While to this moment (April 2023) I have not been to the MRR, I was able to *travel* to the region through the interviewees' words and my desktop research. Depictions of the MRR as "a place with a universal appeal (...) a region for everyone" (The Guardian, 2021, online), "[a region] bursting with epic experiences and unfathomable landscapes" (Tourism Australia, 2023, online), or "a living and breathing embodiment of ancient geography and Wardandi [the traditional custodians whose Country includes the MRR] song lines (...) natural beauty, abundance of space, fine wine and fresh coastal air make a holiday here the remedy to modern life" (Margaret River Region, 2021, online), are evidence of a destination with various natural and cultural attractions worth visiting and conserving. During most of the interviews I noticed interviewees' feeling of belonging to the region's natural and cultural attributes and many of them desired a more sustainable destination. This PhD thesis wants to contribute to their efforts. Therefore, this research focuses on the evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination to identify the geographical and historical factors promoting or hindering a sustainability transition.



Figure 1: Pictures depicting the Margaret River region, *The Margaret River region* (2016, online)

The MRR is located a three-hour drive south from Perth, the capital city of Western Australia (WA). The MRR was established in the land of the Wardandi Noongar – to whom the author pays his respects – by European settlers in 1834. Currently, with a large variety of natural, cultural, and heritage tourism resources, tourism has been and is expected to be one of the main economic drivers of the MRR. For instance, in the 2018-2019 period the MRR received 2.89 million domestic and international visitors (1.30 million day-trippers and 1.59 million overnight visitors) and generated direct and indirect jobs for 20 % of its population (MRBTA, 2019). Tourism has been attracting international investment to the region, mainly to the high-end accommodation sector. For instance, Marriott International announced a US\$100 million tourism development in the MRR in 2020 (Murray, 2020). However, when looking in depth at the past (*koorah*), present (*nitja*), and future (*boordahwan*) of the destination, it is possible to notice that tourism has followed dynamic evolution and that its continuous development might not be as secure as it appears (*koorah*, *nitja*, and *boordahwan* is a phrase in the Noongar language and it is used when writing about the Wardandi region with respect for the Traditional Owners).

A look into the past of the MRR reveals that while tourism was part of the region even before the first European settlements appeared in 1834, it has not always been a significant driver of regional economic development. In fact, prior to tourism in its current status, other industries including timber, tobacco, and dairy, emerged and, for some time, were the main regional economic activity shaping the economic landscape of the region (see Chapter 6, and Flood Chavez et al., 2023). Returning to the present, an analysis of the destination's challenges indicates that it is struggling to balance the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism (Chapter 7), and, therefore, is at a critical juncture where related and unrelated actors can influence the future and survival of the destination (chapters 8 and 9). Among those potential future scenarios, a transition towards sustainable tourism – a sustainability transition in tourism – appears as one the most promising paths for the MRR.

This thesis addresses the MRR as a tourist destination using two complementary paradigms, evolutionary economic geography (EEG) and the multi-level perspective (MLP), that are drawn from the cognate disciplines of economic geography, evolutionary economics, sociology of technology, and innovation and organisational studies (Chapter 4). An additional, though important, cognate discipline that provides relevant concepts to this thesis is tourism geography, particularly from an economic geography perspective (Chapter 3). By means of focusing on the evolution of the destination and the interactions of tourism as a sociotechnical system, this thesis identifies and addresses an empirical research gap (the evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination) and a theoretical research gap (sustainability transitions in tourism).

The empirical research gap refers to the extant studies focused on the MRR that have mainly concentrated on different sub-sectors or aspects of the destination such as accommodation (Pforr et al., 2021), coastal development (Wesley and Pforr, 2010), local culture (Godden, 2017), or particular historical periods (Jones and Jones, 2020), but have not encompassed the influence of the region's history on its current condition and potential future scenarios. Perhaps, the closest study that has also contributed to closing this gap is Sanders (2006). While an important source for understanding the historical geography of the MRR, his approach is narrow when compared to the recent developments in EEG and the MLP that offer a fine-grained

approach to the evolution and future trajectories of regional industries, and their interactions with inbound and outbound industries, events, and processes.

The theoretical research gap in addressing sustainability transitions in tourism is of high relevance as tourism is considered one of the main contributors to greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and changes of land-use (Lenzen et al., 2018) and is recognised by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) as a pivotal sector where sustainability transitions should occur (UNEP, 2011a). Despite these considerations, tourism has not received enough attention within the sustainability transition research field, as noted by Niewiadomski and Brouder (2022). It suffices to mention that one of the latest state-of-the-art papers on sustainability transitions (Köhler et al., 2019) does not make a single mention of tourism. This project makes three relevant theoretical contributions. First, the thesis demonstrates the applicability of the MLP to the tourism sector (chapters 6 and 8). Second, this thesis implements an encompassing tourism innovation typology to identify niche innovations towards sustainable tourism at the destination level (Chapter 8). Hence, this thesis expands the debate about the role and nature of innovation in tourist destinations. Third, this thesis also contributes to research on geographies of sustainability transitions (Chapter 4) by using an EEG perspective to analyse multiple place-specific factors that constrain or enable transitions towards a more sustainable destination (Chapter 9). In addition to these theoretical contributions, this research project also draws attention of the sustainability transitions research agenda to the tourism sector (Chapters 4 and 10).

## **1.2. Research objectives and aims**

The overarching aim of this project is to understand how the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR is shaped by the evolution of the destination amid a constant struggle between stable configurations that aim to maintain their status quo and internal and external forces that challenge such status quo. As such, this thesis aims to provide answers to five relevant research questions:

1. How do the challenges to the tourism industry in the MRR and the emerging responses to them influence the sustainability of the destination?

2. How advanced is the MRR's transition to more sustainable forms of tourism as a result of the sustainability-related initiatives taking place at the destination?
3. What are the path-dependent factors and how do they influence the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR?
4. What are the path-shaping factors and how do they influence the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR?
5. What has been the transformative potential of the COVID-19 pandemic to foster sustainability transitions in tourism in the MRR?

The first research question aims to understand the current condition of the MRR as a tourist destination from a sustainability perspective by means of identifying and analysing the challenges faced by the tourism industry in the MRR and the sustainability-related responses emerging at the destination. As such, Chapter 7 addresses the balance between the environmental, sociocultural, and economic challenges affecting the MRR as a tourist destination and the various initiatives developed by internal and external actors to bring solutions to those challenges. This chapter identifies an ongoing sustainability transition taking place at the destination.

The second research question enquires about the progress towards sustainable tourism – a tourism aware of its multiple impacts and the needs of its stakeholders (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017) – that has been achieved at the destination. Building on Chapter's 7 findings, Chapter 8 uses the MLP's phases of transition to determine the phase that the sustainability transition in the MRR has reached. Chapter 8 argues that the transition in tourism in the MRR was entering a second phase – incipient institutionalisation process – when the COVID-19 pandemic impact paused tourism activities worldwide.

The third and fourth research questions involve the concepts of path-dependence and path-creation which are key concepts underpinning this research. Since both concepts are largely addressed in Chapter 4, at this stage it suffices to indicate that path-dependence refers to the influence of history on the current and future potential trajectories of a region while path-creation implies a break with the past (Garud and Karnøe, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2010). Hence, history becomes an important

element to address these research questions. Chapter 6 focuses on the historical transformation of the destination and, as a result, partially answers the second and third research questions. Chapter 9 complements Chapter's 6 answer to these research questions because it identifies and analyses the path-dependent and path-shaping factors interacting with the ongoing sustainability transition in the MRR. The last research question aim to explore the transformative potential of the COVID-19 pandemic to foster sustainability transitions. As such, it emerged during the research. It is addressed in Chapter 8.

To address these research questions, this research project gathered qualitative data from several sources mainly using two methods of data collection: semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The project involved 54 participants, including representatives of six tourism-related sectors (wine, adventure, sun and surf, food and beverage, wellbeing, and arts), three levels of government (local, WA state, and Federal), non-profit organisations, local and subregional Destination management organisations (DMOs), local grassroots organisations, and residents' associations. For the documentary analysis, the project created a database of 798 documents composed of primary and secondary sources such as newspaper and magazine articles, websites, institutional reports, and archival records. The data gathered were analysed using Miles and Huberman's method (see Miles et al., 2013; Punch, 2005).

### **1.3. Theoretical foundations**

This thesis has two clear theoretical foundations that provide a broad base for addressing the historical evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination, the MRR's transition towards sustainable tourism, the influence of the MRR's past developments on present and future trajectories, and the influence of the MRR's place-specific features on its transitions. Those foundations are EEG and the MLP (Chapter 4). While both frameworks pay close attention to the role of history, agency, and place; they have not been used simultaneously in tourism studies. In fact, EEG has been the framework most used to address the evolution of tourist destinations (Brouder, 2014a) whereas the MLP, on the contrary, has only recently begun to be suggested as a potential approach to address a similar subject – how destinations evolve towards sustainability (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). As such, this thesis endeavours to use both approaches to address the transition of the MRR to more

sustainable forms of tourism. The MLP and EEG, addressed in detail in Chapter 4, are briefly introduced below.

The MLP is an approach that focuses on the transition of sociotechnical systems as a result of, mostly, radical innovations that are able to shift those systems into new configurations (Geels, 2004). To understand the complex dynamics of transitions, the MLP proposes three analytical levels that have distinctive degrees of structuration: niches, regimes, and landscapes (Geels, 2002a). Niches are protected spaces and the locus for radical innovation; regimes represent the institutional structuring of existing systems which tend to be static; and landscapes are the exogenous developments that could influence regimes and niches (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels and Schot, 2007). Over the last decade, sustainability transitions research has utilised the MLP as a useful conceptualisation of how unsustainable sociotechnical systems transition towards more sustainable configurations, mainly in sectors such as energy and transport (Köhler et al., 2019). While the MLP has not yet been used to address sustainability transitions in tourism, this thesis aims to demonstrate its applicability to tourism studies, despite tourism being considered a low-technology and not very innovative sector (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022).

Within sustainability transitions research, *geographies of sustainability transitions* has become an important research strand. This branch aims to understand the role of place in sustainability transitions in an attempt to explain the spatial unevenness of transitions (Truffer et al., 2015). Considering the place-specific and place-dependent attributes of tourist destinations (Nepal, 2009), this branch of sustainability transitions research proves useful in analysing the role of place in the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR and calls for attention to the important factors such as pre-existing geographical conditions, local and visitors' culture, transient and local labour, institutional settings, and contested views about the region.

EEG also pays attention to the place-dependent factors of a given region, although it provides a more broad-based paradigm as it aims to understand *inter alia* the historical evolution of the economic landscape (Boschma and Martin, 2010). EEG is



underpinned by three theoretical frameworks – generalised Darwinism, complexity theory, and path dependence theory – that allow it to study the concept of *evolution* from an interdisciplinary lens (Boschma and Martin, 2010, 2007). As such, various EEG concepts – mainly those related to path-dependence – have secured a strong place in the analysis of how tourist destinations evolve (see, for instance, Bramwell and Cox, 2009; Brouder and Eriksson, 2013a; Gill and Williams, 2014; Halkier and James, 2017; Ma and Hassink, 2014; Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2017). EEG, especially the concepts associated with path-dependence theory, allows research on tourism to not only focus on how past developments constrain or enable the trajectory of a destination, but also, due to more recent progress in EEG, to acknowledge the role of agency and innovation in the emergence of new paths (Ma and Hassink, 2014). In that sense, this thesis uses EEG, mainly concepts associated with path-dependence theory, to address the evolution of tourism in the MRR since its emergence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Chapters 6 and 8).

The sustainability transition of tourism in the MRR entails the transformation of the MRR into a more sustainable destination which poses a number of important questions such as *what makes a destination sustainable? who decides what a sustainable destination is? or, how can sustainable tourism be achieved?* Neither the MLP nor EEG directly address those questions – or similar ones – that are relevant for this thesis. As a result, this thesis critically analyses sustainable tourism as it is the normative objective of sustainability transitions in tourism. Sustainable tourism (Chapter 3), although deeply rooted in sustainable development, proposes a standard and, to some extent, achievable guideline to incorporate sustainability principles into the tourism sector. In that sense, sustainable tourism promotes the economic growth of tourism in a destination while conserving the destination's natural, cultural, and heritage capital, and improving the conditions for destination's residents (Mowforth and Munt, 2015). In this regard, a sustainable tourism lens allows this thesis to identify the sustainability challenges and initiatives taking place in the MRR in order to define whether the destination is unsustainable or transitioning towards sustainable tourism (see Chapter 7). To fully understand the roots of sustainable tourism, this thesis also addresses the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development (Chapter 2).

Having briefly addressed the main theoretical basis of this thesis, it is possible to point out how they are used complementarily by this research project. By means of understanding tourism as a sociotechnical system, this thesis follows the evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until its current configuration. The MLP allows the thesis to identify the regime, niches, and landscape levels, their interactions, and their influence on achieving a diverse destination (Chapter 6) and a more sustainable diverse destination (Chapter 8). In turn, by using an EEG lens, this thesis identifies the path-dependent factors that constrain the tourism regime in the destination, and the path-shaping forces generated in tourism niches during both a historical transition (Chapter 6) and a more contemporary sustainability transition (Chapters 8 and 9).

Finally, in methodological terms the thesis is a qualitative single territorial case study (see Yin, 2003) focused on the MRR as a tourist destination (see Chapter 5). The case study is based on semi-structured interviews with multiple tourism stakeholders and documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources. The case study strategy consists of addressing the past of the destination (late 19<sup>th</sup> century to late 1990s) relying mainly on documentary analysis, and, in turn, analysing the present and the possible future of the destination (from the late 1990s onwards) mainly based on the interview analysis. While there are obvious differences between the two local government areas (the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and the city of Busselton) that the MRR as a tourist destination encompasses, this research project refrained from treating them separately due to the strong historical and current bonds between them (MRBTA, 2019). Likewise, since the MRR as a tourist destination relies on place-specific characteristics, it is important to remark that this thesis does not aim to produce generalised theories about tourist destinations, but to trigger the discussion on sustainability transitions in tourism and to contribute to the extant literature on the evolution of tourist destinations.

#### **1.4. The structure of the thesis**

This dissertation consists of ten chapters including this introduction (Chapter 1) and final conclusions (Chapter 10). Chapters 2 to 4 discuss the theoretical bases of the thesis, Chapter 5 presents the methodology (including a brief description of the area of study), while Chapters 6 to 9 relate the empirical findings.

In that sense, Chapters 2 and 3 present relevant concepts and cornerstones for the understanding of Chapter 4 which draws from the earlier chapters and literature on EEG and MLP to articulate a strong and innovative theoretical framework adopted in this research (an EEG / MLP framework). Chapter 2 discusses sustainability and sustainable development which are relevant concepts for the understanding of sustainable tourism and sustainability transitions. This chapter suggests that sustainable development revolves around economic growth and is deeply influenced by the neoliberal agenda. As a result, efforts to achieve a more sustainable future, while positive, might still have to overcome the current capitalist ideology. Chapter 3 attends to tourism which is one of the foci of this thesis. As such, this chapter presents relevant concepts from tourism studies and then links them to the previous chapter by means of critically discussing the concept of sustainable tourism. While this chapter agrees that sustainable tourism is a valid objective for many destinations, the chapter also calls for a tailored incorporation of sustainability into tourism mainly due to the particular place-specific characteristics of any given destination. In turn, Chapter 4 presents the theoretical foundation of the thesis as it addresses EEG – mainly focused on path-dependence – and the MLP. The former allows the thesis to address the evolution of tourist destinations by paying attention to how its past (*koorah*) development constrains or enables its future (*boordahwan*) trajectory. In turn, the latter offers a lens through which it is possible to analyse tourism as a sociotechnical system that evolves based on its core structure (regime) under constraining or reinforcing pressures from the outside or inside of the regime (landscape and niches). By using this EEG / MLP framework to address tourism, this thesis is making an important theoretical contribution.

Chapter 5 discusses the methodological as well as the ontological and epistemological foundations of this thesis. After presenting the main methods of data collection and analysis, this chapter explains the strategy to use both EEG and the MLP to address sustainability transitions in tourism. Importantly, this chapter also provides a succinct description of the MRR. Following the methodology chapter, Chapter 6 begins the empirical part of this thesis. This chapter has a strong historical nature as it follows the evolution of the tourism regime from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when tourism emerged in the MRR, to the conformation of the current tourism regime. This chapter operationalises an EEG-informed MLP (EEG / MLP framework)

to disentangle the various past (*koorah*) events and factors that contributed to the emergence of the current tourism regime. As such, this chapter identifies the phases and the types of paths that the MRR underwent between the 1950s and 1990s to evolve from a cave-focused destination to a diverse destination based on wine, sun and surf, and nature. As such, Chapter 6 contributes to answering the third and fourth research questions.

Chapter 7 brings the focus to the present (*nitja*) as it addresses how sustainable the MRR is as a tourism destination based on the persisting challenges to the tourism industry and emerging sustainability-related initiatives in the destination. This chapter argues that while the tourism industry in the MRR is aware of the need to make tourism sustainable, it only tends to promote mere incremental innovation, even though movements towards sustainable tourism became more relevant during the last decade. Chapter 7 contributes to answering the second research question as it indicates that the destination is undergoing a transition towards sustainable tourism. However, it is Chapter 8 that directly answers the second research question as it addresses in detail the sustainability transition in tourism taking place in the destination. Therefore, using the EEG / MLP framework, Chapter 8 assesses how much progress towards sustainable tourism has been made in the MRR. This chapter identifies the phases of the intended sustainability transition that have already taken place in the MRR and discusses potential future (*boordahwan*) paths that the destination might follow. In addition, Chapter 8 addresses the fifth research question as it analyses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the destination and on the sustainability transition. Chapter 9 delves into the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR in order to identify the path-dependent factors that are restraining the regime from shifting towards a more sustainable configuration, and the path-shaping forces exercising pressure on the regime in an attempt to shape a more sustainable destination. Chapter 9 directly answers the third and fourth research questions. Finally, Chapter 10 summarises the findings, and theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis.

Finally, as noted in this introduction, this thesis is deeply related to three Wardandi Noongar (the traditional custodians whose Country includes the MRR) words presented at the beginning of this chapter (*koorah*, *nitja*, *boordahwan*). Indeed, the

research focuses on past (*koorah*) events in the MRR that shaped the present (*nitja*) conditions of the destination that can, in turn, inform potential future (*boordahwan*) scenarios for the destination.

## Chapter 2.

### A starting point: sustainable development

*“Half the wealth around the world is held by people who could fit around a conference table”*

*(Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary, 2019)*

#### 2.1. Introduction

This is the first theoretical chapter of this thesis. Its main objective is to describe and critically address sustainable development. This basic concept underpins more complex concepts and theories in relation to sustainable tourism (Chapter 3) and sustainability transitions (Chapter 4). For instance, according to United Nations World Tourism Organisation and United Nations Environment Programme (2012), tourism is one of the main sectors to promote the incorporation of sustainability. This aim responds to the fact that tourism is considered not only as one of the main contributors to global warming (Lenzen et al., 2018), but also as an important driver for development in many regions (UNWTO, 2018). Hence, by means of critically assessing sustainable development this chapter prepares the ground to address the scope, flaws, strengths, and complexity of sustainable tourism and sustainability transitions. In the case of sustainable tourism, this chapter contributes to the understanding of complex interactions between the economic, environmental, and sociocultural pillars of sustainable development such as trade-offs and decoupling, and the reasons behind the complexity of achieving sustainable tourism. Meanwhile, sustainability transitions research is also informed by this chapter as sustainable development often influences the “normative directionality” (Köhler et al., 2019, p. 3) of every sustainability transition in a given region, or destination in the case of tourism. As such, the discussion in this chapter helps understand the distinctive features of sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region (MRR).

The remainder of this chapter is divided into two sections. Section 2.2 presents sustainable development and focuses on the prevailing debate about its contested nature, its fundamental pillars, and the governance challenges that surround this topic. In turn, section 2.3 prepares the ground for the following chapter.

## 2.2. Sustainable development

In 1982, the UN created the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) to provide solutions to the issues that were concerning humanity at that time, related to equity, peace, freedom, economic growth, and environmental challenges. As a result, the WCED established a group of experts led by Gro Brundtland (the Brundtland Commission) that released the report *Our Common Future*, also known as the *Brundtland Report*, in 1987 (Kates et al., 2005). The report placed sustainable development in the centre of the policy discourse with the support of a broad range of nongovernmental and governmental organisations. It also proposed a set of seven critical objectives to achieve sustainable development (see Table 1).

Table 1: Critical objectives of sustainable development, based on WCED (1990)

Objectives	Description
Reviving growth	Growth must address people who live in absolute poverty because poverty reduces their capacity to use resources in a sustainable manner. Growth should be promoted more in developing countries while in developed ones the focus should be on improving their resource and energy efficiency.
Changing the quality of growth	Economic growth should consider the costs of the environmental impacts caused and its outcomes should be well distributed in favour of the poor.
Meeting essential needs for jobs, food, energy, water, and sanitation	The challenge remains on meeting the needs of an expanding world population. The report emphasises the connection of all those needs with their environmental and social impacts.
Ensuring a sustainable level of population	Policies should focus on leading populations to stable growth rates that are compatible with the productive capacity of ecosystems.
Conserving and enhancing the resource base	Earth's natural resources must be conserved and enhanced to meet the needs of global population in a sustainable manner. Nature conservation is also a moral obligation for other living beings and future generations.
Reorienting technology and managing risk	The development of technology should address environmental and social issues. There should be a relevant technology transfer from developed countries to developing ones. Furthermore, public policies should ensure that firms take fuller account of environmental factors in the technologies they develop.
Merging environment and economics in decision making	Policies must find the way to make economic development and environmental protection compatible. These policies should be implemented at all levels.

Sustainable development became a new paradigm of development as it proposed a new way of thinking about environment, development, and governance (Lélé, 1991; Redclift, 2005; Sneddon et al., 2006). Nevertheless, to gain endorsement from both developed and developing countries, the Brundtland Commission had to frame sustainable development as a balanced compromise between economic growth and its impact on the environment and society (Dresner, 2008). As such, sustainable development became one of the most important global policy frameworks. Yet, that was only the beginning as several major international summits followed the report to discuss the implementation of sustainable development.

Some of the most important summits were the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992 which was the first official summit, the UN Millennium summit in New York (USA) in 2000 that resulted on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Rio+20 in Rio de Janeiro where green economy – a policy framework closely related to sustainable development – achieved some relevance, and the 2015 UN summit in New York where the MDGs were reassessed and transformed into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Barbier, 2012; Mulligan, 2017; SDSN, 2015). SDGs (Figure 2) represent a shift from the MDGs because they hold a more transformative agenda that considers poverty and underdevelopment as related to environmental issues and social inequalities (Freistein and Mahler, 2016; Hickel, 2019). The SDGs call for more resolute action from nation states and international agencies to address global environmental impacts (Mulligan, 2017). The SDGs and the Paris Agreement – a global agreement adopted in 2015 in France to tackle climate change and limit temperature rise well below 2°C – are currently the main sustainable development related policy guidelines to prevent global warming to become irreversible, and to promote more sustainable forms of production and consumption (IPCCC, 2018; SDSN, 2015).





Figure 2: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations (2015)

Despite the optimism that surrounded the UNSDGs, they have not been free from criticisms. For instance, the SDGs' pro-development discourse is contradictory as it consolidates the conditions that actually cause the deprivation scenarios (Hannis, 2017; Weber, 2017). Hickel (2019) uses SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) as a clear example of the inherent contradiction not only in the SDGs but in its sustainable development roots. SDG 8 proposes a global economic growth of 3 % by 2030 and assumes that the environmental impact of such growth will remain within sustainable levels. As a result, alternatives to the UNSDGs and to sustainable development have emerged or re-emerged that are more closely related to Indigenous beliefs and traditions (see Flood Chávez, 2020; Kothari et al., 2019 for examples).

All in all, despite the summits and efforts to achieve a sustainable future, sustainable development is at risk of becoming irrelevant for policymaking (Holden et al., 2014; Hopwood et al., 2005). One of the reasons for this situation is that sustainable development has remained a politically contested concept (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000, p. 1). Other reasons refer to its vagueness as it attempts to merge two incompatible ideas (sustainability and economic growth) in order to

reinforce the neoliberal agenda (Hickel, 2019; Redclift, 2005; Weber, 2017). Nevertheless, it is precisely the vagueness of sustainable development that has made it a suitable and malleable policy tool to insert environmental and social concerns into the political mainstream (Kates et al., 2005; Sneddon et al., 2006; Zaccai, 2012). Hence, this section elaborates on the contested concept of sustainable development; the environmental, social, and economic dimensions that underpin it; and the necessary governance required for its achievement.

### 2.2.1. The sustainable development debate

To understand the complexity and contested nature of sustainable development, it is necessary to briefly address its individual components. Development as a concept is, at least, as complex as sustainable development. Adelman (2018, p. 18) argues that “[development] has seldom been *owned* by those subjected to it and too often been imposed on populations through violent forms of neo-colonialism and imperialism that repeatedly resulted in chronic socio-political, economic, and environmental crises”. This argument aligns with Harvey’s (2007) large critique of neoliberalism as a driver of uneven geographies that often benefits global political and economic powers. Indeed, development and its counterpart – underdevelopment – has been, at least, a dangerous discourse (Esteva, 2009; Sachs, 2009). Esteva (2009) argues that since the aftermath of World War II (WWII) the development discourse has mainly fostered the idea that it was the only path out of underdevelopment. According to this discourse, underdevelopment was an undignified context related to poverty and marginalisation. Nonetheless, the environmental and social impacts of development became more evident by the end of the 1960s. As a result, concerns about the environmental and social impacts of development – mostly Western-driven (Ruggerio, 2021) – grew since the 1970s.

Sustainability as a concept is also highly complex. After the release of Our Common Future (WCED, 1990), an increasingly interchangeable use of sustainability and sustainable development took place (see, for instance, Baker, 2005; Holden et al., 2014; Liu, 2009; Mulligan, 2017). This tendency though often implied that sustainability is the process through which sustainable development is achieved or that sustainability corresponded to the environmental dimension of sustainable development (Holden et al., 2014). In fact, debates towards the conceptualisation of

sustainability are still open. Scholars have approached sustainability from different perspectives such as resilience and systems theory (Ruggerio, 2021). Despite the diversity of approaches, in general terms they agree that sustainability relies on intergenerational equity and conservation of natural capital (Dresner, 2008; Ruggerio, 2021). Perhaps, the most encompassing manner to address sustainability is to visualise it as a spectrum that goes from eco-centrism to anthropo-centrism (Figure 3) (Davies, 2013; Dresner, 2008). The pivotal difference lies in the understanding of *capital* and whether trade-offs can occur between man-made capital and natural capital (Davies, 2013). Weak sustainability, rooted in neoclassical economics, assumes an almost infinite substitutability between the natural and the human-made capital whereas strong sustainability, related to ecological economics, envisions almost no substitution (Costanza, 1991; Davies, 2013; Ruggerio, 2021). Hence, sustainability is a contested concept, a feature that influences sustainable development (Redclift, 2005).

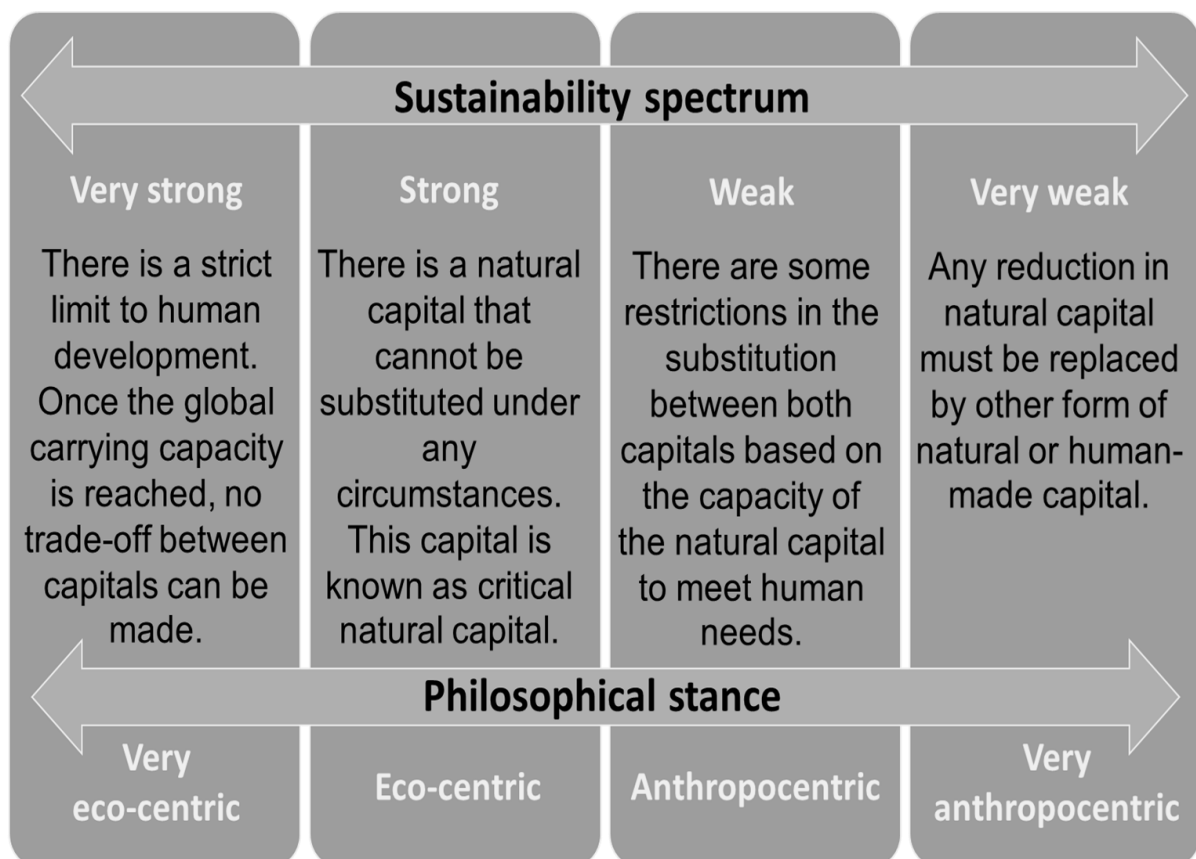


Figure 3: The sustainability spectrum, modified from Davies (2013) and Ruggerio (2021)

Having addressed development and sustainability, it is obvious that merging both core concepts was not an easy task for the Brundtland Commission. In order to reduce the negative connotation of development, the Commission phrased development as all the human activities done to improve the conditions of the environment they live in (WCED, 1990). Based on that, the WCED (1990, p. 41) defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The outcomes of the Brundtland Report triggered divided opinions. On the one hand there was an optimistic expectation as sustainability was now part of a major global policy framework (Baker, 2005), whereas on the other hand, there was a more critical perspective that labelled sustainable development as a way to “square the circle” (Dresner, 2008, p. 1) or as an *oxymoron* (Redclift, 2005).

In that sense, it is fundamental to understand that sustainable development was never an ideologically neutral concept. Sustainable development emerged as a global path where economic growth and modernisation were achievable while conserving the environment, in opposition to other paths where economic development was not preponderant (Du Pisani, 2006). As Dresner (2008) indicated, sustainable development was the price to pay to include the idea of sustainability into the global political mainstream. As a result, actors at different scales and in different sectors, including researchers, policymakers, civil society, local communities, indigenous grassroots organisations, NGOs and corporations, have engaged in debates and commitments under the sustainable development banner (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000; Mulligan, 2017; Neumann, 2005). More importantly, those debates and commitments aimed to address various global sustainability challenges such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, land-management, and social equity (Kates et al., 2005). Indeed, sustainable development triggered initiatives related to cleaner technologies, better environmental governance, gender equality, and poverty alleviation (Curren and Metzger, 2017). In that sense, sustainable development contributed to reframing the relationship between environmental sustainability and economic growth in policymaking processes (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000).

While representing a new paradigm in global policymaking, sustainable development is still infused of western neoliberal ideas aligned with weak sustainability (Adelman, 2018). Despite the benefits of economic growth, the environmental and social impact of such an economic-focused development – often under the banner of sustainable development – cannot be overlooked (Curren and Metzger, 2017). One of the fundamental arguments to understand the flaws of sustainable development is the inherent incompatibility of development and sustainability (Adelman, 2018; Curren and Metzger, 2017; Escobar, 1996). Indeed, the Brundtland Commission considered that the problems with achieving sustainable development did not lie in the impacts of economic growth but in the lack of sufficient technological and scientific progress (Blühdorn, 2016; Escobar, 1996). As a result, development appeared as a potential solution to poverty and environmental degradation (Lélé, 1991; Washington, 2015), and important issues such as climate change, social inequality, and biodiversity degradation were addressed from a technological and scientific approach rather than from a political one (Swyngedouw, 2017). These assumptions might prove to be, at least, too optimistic decades later. As argued by Adelman (2018), in a world that currently struggles with increasing social inequality and climate catastrophes, it appears that sustainable development's promise to achieve economic growth in a world with finite resources was merely an illusion. Hence, it appears that rather than tackling urgent global challenges through strong political action, sustainable development promotes policies that merely postpone those challenges (Adelman, 2018; Swyngedouw, 2017). As Esteva (2009, p. 13) contended, sustainable development “has been explicitly conceived as a strategy for sustaining development” rather than incorporating sustainability into the idea of development.

Furthermore, the complexity and malleability of sustainable development have led to the proliferation of different approaches to the concept, with some of them being incomplete, misleading or deliberately deceiving (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000). For instance, the vagueness of the concept allows corporations to embellish their activities, or international organisations to reinvent themselves as global environmental managers (Neumann, 2005; Redclift, 2005). Yet, despite the critiques and its contested nature, sustainable development has become an important driver to address three massively complex dimensions, or pillars, such as the environment, economic growth, and social well-being (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000).

### 2.2.2. Pillars of sustainable development

Few years after the release of the Brundtland Report, the *triple bottom line* diagram became popular as it proposed a simplified visualisation of the key elements underpinning sustainable development referred to as the social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Mulligan, 2017). Indeed, according to the Report, sustainable development aims to simultaneously improve human wellbeing, encourage a more equitable distribution of resources, and promote development in harmony with ecological integrity over intergenerational timescales (Sneddon et al., 2006). Sachs (2015) considers this aim as ambitious, encompassing, and immensely complex because it implies a balance between three already complex dimensions. Nevertheless, the complex and encompassing nature of sustainable development has been key to promote, for instance, the incorporation of environmental considerations in projects that aim to improve socioeconomic conditions of people in marginalised conditions (Baker, 2005), or the equal inclusion of social and economic factors in environmental conservation projects (Edwards, 2005). Yet, to achieve joint environmental, social, and economic improvements to meet intra- and inter-generational needs remains a challenge for sustainable development projects and programmes (Hansmann et al., 2012).

According to Portney (2015), the *triple bottom line* reflects the sustainable development objective to promote a harmonious improvement of its three pillars. As such, this objective rejects any potential trade-offs between the economic, environment, and social pillars (Hansmann et al., 2012; Portney, 2015). However, the complexity of the sustainable development pillars plus the inherent contested nature of sustainable development point to the fact that trade-offs are inevitable. In fact, it is hard to identify scenarios where negative or positive interactions (trade-offs) between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions do not occur (Hansmann et al., 2012). Trade-offs, mainly in favour of the economic dimension, are constantly promoted and reinforced by the current capitalist mode of production and its neoliberal model (Adelman, 2018; Fletcher and Rammelt, 2017; Næss and Høyer, 2009). Building on that, Fletcher and Rammelt (2017) elaborate scenarios that depict the trade-offs between the environmental, social, and economic pillars of sustainable development (see Table 2). Their scenarios suggest that any choice to benefit one of

the dimensions will have an impact on the conditions of the other two because the pillars are mutually exclusive. Considering that the overexploitation of Earth's natural capital deteriorates natural ecosystems, human health, life quality, and, in turn, undermines economic growth (Næss and Høyer, 2009), makes it necessary to pay attention to the different trade-offs between the pillars of sustainable development. Especially when those trade-offs clearly benefit economic growth over environmental conservation and social wellbeing.

Table 2: Trade-offs scenarios, modified from Fletcher and Rammelt (2017)

Scenarios	Description	Dimension neglected
Natural capitalism platform	Efforts to internalise environmental costs while maintaining economic growth as an attempt to reconcile environmental impact and businesses' profit.	Social
Neo-extractive strategies	Strategies to address inequality while pursuing economic growth which will increase pressure on the natural capital.	Environmental
Pro-poor environmental conservation initiatives	Strategies to address inequality and promote environmental conservation compromising the potential for economic growth.	Economic
Focus on the three dimensions simultaneously	Attempts to simultaneously internalise environmental costs, address inequality and foster economic growth would imply massive increment of prices at the expense of profit which could represent a challenge to the current capitalist system.	Economic

In an attempt to reduce or nullify trade-offs (especially those in favour of economic growth), *decoupling* emerged as a potential solution (see, for instance, Curren and Metzger, 2017; Fletcher and Rammelt, 2017; Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000; Portney, 2015; Sachs, 2015). Decoupling refers to the strategies to disengage economic growth from its environmental and social negative impacts (Fletcher and Rammelt, 2017). In other words, decoupling aims to maintain economic growth while reducing its pressure on key natural resources, significantly reducing pollution, and transforming unsustainable patterns of consumption (Sachs, 2015). Decoupling is an

imperative objective for sustainable development, especially considering the +1.5°C and +2°C scenarios reported in the Paris Agreement which are not very easy to achieve (Hickel and Kallis, 2019).

UNEP (2011a) classifies decoupling as relative and absolute. Relative decoupling refers to acceptable trade-offs between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions whereas absolute decoupling entails no trade-offs. As decoupling moves from relative to absolute, its complexity and difficulty increases which is why most of the empirical evidence of decoupling relies on the relative classification. In fact, relevant studies show that there is no empirical evidence that supports absolute decoupling on a global scale in a context of continued economic growth (Hickel and Kallis, 2019). Besides, Jackson (2011) argues that decoupling overlooks the finite amount of natural resources (planetary boundaries) and, therefore, contributes to the illusion that sustainability and continuous economic growth are simultaneously possible (see also Fletcher and Rammelt, 2017). All in all, whether relative or absolute, decoupling is still a complex objective for sustainable development, especially in a context of increasing depletion of natural resources, decline in environment quality indicators, and pressure on the environment (Zenchanka and Korshuk, 2017). Thus, to achieve any degree of decoupling changes in public policies, corporate behaviour, and patterns of production and consumption as well as technological innovations leading to resource-efficiency and clean technologies (Bailey and Caprotti, 2014; Sachs, 2015; UNEP, 2011b).

Innovation plays an important role to achieve decoupling and, consequently, sustainable development (Cecere and Mazzanti, 2017). Innovation, in this case, must focus on creating new processes, products, and markets as well as on reshaping existing unsustainable production processes (Barbier, 2011; UNEP, 2011a). In order to overcome persistent and complex barriers such as unsustainable patterns of production and consumption (He et al., 2019; Knuth, 2017; Perez, 2013; World Bank, 2012), innovation towards sustainable development requires the collaboration of various actors, such as governments, corporations, universities, and think tanks, as well as public and private investment (Droste et al., 2016; Schlör et al., 2017; UNEP, 2011a). However, as noted by Chapple et al. (2011), the role of governments to promote innovations has a geographical dimension. In other words,



it changes along space. In that sense, innovation towards sustainable development can promote processes of creative destruction that could result on the emergence, decline, or transformation of regions' economic landscapes. It is also important to recognise that innovation encompasses not only technological development, but also organisational and institutional novelty (Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a; Schlör et al., 2017). All of them are required for sustainable development (Schlör et al., 2017).

As noted, the role of governments, private corporations, the market, and other actors is important to achieve sustainable development. In this regard, UNEP (2014, 2011b) argue that while governments should invest and create policies to achieve sustainable development, it is up to the market forces to select the best alternatives. However, as argued by Stiglitz (2019), in the current capitalist system markets might tend to be profit-driven often overlooking the involved environmental and social impacts. This evidences the pervasive cost-benefit logic that underpins economic growth where environmental and social elements often become mere variables that can be traded off (Sachs, 1999). In that sense, the role of government in setting the limits for the market and of governance to implement effectively measures towards sustainable development has received more attention in the last decades (Mulligan, 2017).

### 2.2.3. Governance for sustainable development

The Brundtland Report aimed to reshape global policymaking by promoting global sustainability-related agreements endorsed by state government, non-government actors, and, more recently, civil society representatives (Baker, 2005; Meadowcroft, 2007). This process led to a new form of governance, a governance for sustainable development. Governance for sustainable development refers to a process that encompasses public debate, political decision-making, policy formation and implementation in order to steer the societal transformation envisioned by sustainable development (Adger and Jordan, 2009; Lange et al., 2013; Meadowcroft, 2007, 2005; Sachs, 2015). As such, governance for sustainable development should include social, environmental, ethical, and economic considerations as well as an intra- and intergenerational justice perspective (Baker, 2005).

Governance for sustainable development is an extremely complex process as it involves several actors at different scales and frequently with different interests. That complexity is even worsened by ongoing interlinked sustainability challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, social inequality, and political turmoil (Biermann, 2012). Governance for sustainable development has to cope with several uncertainties, unpredictable results, a limited predictability of the impacts of human activity, and the impossibility of knowing the needs of future generations comprehensively (Brandi, 2017; Sjöstedt, 2018). As Sneddon et al. (2006) indicate, governance for sustainable development is progressively becoming a more difficult process for all the actors involved. However, despite the complexity and challenges, it is important to highlight that every success achieved towards sustainable development as a result of a correct governance for sustainable development means one less sustainability challenge for the future generations (Adger and Jordan, 2009).

As such, governance for sustainable development has become pivotal to address societal challenges, such as climate change and social inequalities, despite the complex power dynamics that derive from an increasing globalisation process (Meadowcroft, 2007, 2005). In fact, governance for sustainable development can help to achieve a global societal transformation by evaluating, managing and negotiating the necessary trade-offs between the pillars of sustainable development (Brown, 2009). To that end, governance for sustainable development must address any threat to sustainability, integrate sustainability into general practices of governance, and oversee societal transformations and challenges (Meadowcroft, 2007).

Governance for sustainable development manifests at the global and local level. At the global level the summits (better known as Conference of Parties) organised by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention of Biological Conservation (CBD) are important examples. While the UNFCCC and CBD are important global organisations that aim to address urgent environmental issues (climate change and biodiversity conservation respectively), it is important to indicate that each of them follow different procedures and that their Conference of Parties (COPs) take place independently. Yet, the COP refers to the main decision-

making body for each organisation. The COPs take place regularly (annually in the case of the UNFCCC) to discuss the progress made by each member or party regarding the objectives and commitments of the UNFCCC or CBD (CBD, n.d.; UNFCCC, n.d.). Considering the aims and scope of this thesis, two UNFCCC COPs (COP 21 and 26) and one CBD COP (COP 13) require further coverage.

UNFCCC COP 21 – organised in Paris (France) in 2015 – followed a meticulous and intensive effort by various UN agencies in order to avoid the disappointing outcomes and engagement of the COP 15 in Copenhagen (Denmark) in 2009 (Christoff, 2010; Mulligan, 2017). Such efforts resulted in the COP 21 being considered as a milestone regarding global action against climate change, especially due to the publication of the Paris Agreement (see for instance Sumaila et al., 2019; Vogler, 2018). The Paris Agreement was able to reach consensus between the parties by means of *inter alia* allowing them to set their own emission targets (National Determined Contribution or NDC) that would be reviewed every five years in order to limit the increase in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius – although efforts should target a 1.5 degrees Celsius limit (Malm, 2023; Mulligan, 2017; Vogler, 2018).

Compared to previous agreements, the Paris Agreement was seen as an important step towards a more sustainable future because it presented a concrete target (global average temperature below 2 – 1.5 degrees Celsius) with the support of developed, developing, and small island nations (Mulligan, 2017). The outcomes of the Agreement also had implications for tourism. For instance, Scott et al. (2016) indicate that the Agreement provides a framework for a better understanding of the impacts of climate change on tourism at the international, national, and subnational levels. As such, the Agreement can promote destinations strategies to adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change as well as to reduce the contributions of the tourism sector to global emissions.

However, the Agreement is not flawless. For instance, Malm (2023) lists three main problems. First, the few mandatory provisions and binding policies that have resulted in differentiated levels of engagement by the parties, especially the developed ones which are already failing to comply with their own NDCs. Second, the ineffective

NDCs set by some parties as they do not seem to contribute to the general objective of the Agreement. And third, the weak engagement and recognition of stakeholders at subnational scales that the Agreement has had. Yet, despite those flaws, the Paris Agreement has, on the one hand, motivated various social movements worldwide advocating for renewable energy and stronger political action towards a more sustainable future, whereas on the other, raised awareness worldwide about the impact of climate change and the importance of taking immediate action (Malm, 2023; Vasi, 2018).

In turn, UNFCCC COP 26, held in Glasgow in 2021, was useful to revitalise the commitments taken in the COP 21, especially in terms of the 1.5 degrees Celsius target (UNFCCC, 2021). In addition to the climate change-related discussions, the parties also discussed about tourism and its contribution to climate change (UNFCCC, 2021; Osborne, 2022). Compared to the Paris Agreement, this time tourism was directly addressed. In fact, one of the main outcomes of the COP 26 was the Glasgow Declaration which represents an important global commitment from tourism industries – with support from international and national level tourism bodies – to halve their emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050, to develop climate action plans, to publicly report their progress, and to enhance collaboration among the partners (One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, 2021). Here it is important to indicate that 25 Australian tourism-related organisations have signed this declaration. However, as pointed out by Osborne (2022), no major airline or cruise line have signed the Declaration which drastically reduces expectations about its effectiveness.

In terms of the CBD COPs, there have been important outcomes from them such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in 2010. Those targets were part of CBD's 2011-2020 strategy to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services and are soon been replaced by CBD's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD, 2022; Obura, 2020). The Aichi Biodiversity Targets have contributed *inter alia* to the development of national biodiversity strategies, inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in policy-making processes, and annual biodiversity reports. For instance, Australia's sixth report to the CBD mentions joint conservation initiatives between the Nyungar People (traditional owners of the Margaret River Region where this research is

located) and Western Australian's conservation department (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020a). While the Aichi Biodiversity Targets have technically expired and did not directly target tourism, they have been pivotal for more recent COPs with direct implications for tourism – and this thesis's aims and scope, namely COPs 13 and 14.

COP 13 held in Cancun (Mexico) in 2016 addressed key aspects related to sustainable tourism. On the one hand, the COP 13 emphasised the impact of tourism on biodiversity-rich areas such as national parks, biodiversity hotspots, and coastal destinations, and, therefore, highlighted the need for biodiversity strategies that consider the impact of visitors. On the other hand, this COP identified sustainable tourism – and ecotourism – as key strategies to promote biodiversity conservation, involve local and Indigenous communities in conservation strategies, and raise awareness among visitors and policymakers about the impact of tourism (see CBD, 2016). The outcomes and decisions taken in Cancun fostered discussions about the direct relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation in following COPs. For instance, COP 14 held in Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt) in 2018 focused on incorporating the benefits and costs of biodiversity and ecosystem services into key industries such as tourism (CBD, 2018).

In addition to the global scale, governance for sustainable development takes place at the subnational levels (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000). In this respect local governments – especially economically relevant cities – appear as important actors that can play a major role in influencing nation-wide climate change policies (Aust and Plessis, 2018). Indeed, *Our Common Future* gave local governments a central role in the pursuit of sustainable development which was later reinforced by the release of *Local Agenda 21* in 1992 and the procedures for local governments' engagements with the SDGs in 2015 (see for instance Bulkeley and Betsill, 2005). As such, local governments can be drivers for change as they have a closer connection with local movements and organisations, and, at the same time, can trigger changes at national, or even global, scales (Anguelovski and Martínez Alier, 2014; Aust and Plessis, 2018).

In that sense, sustainable development has contributed to a *glocal* perspective on sustainability challenges. This refers to cases where local sustainability-related problems, such as commodification of a local culture in tourist destinations, become relevant at the global level (Anguelovski and Martínez Alier, 2014; Salazar, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2004). Here, it is important to indicate that sustainable development has a geographic dimension as its accomplishment depends on a number of place-specific factors such as resources availability, income inequalities, and environmental conditions (Liu, 2009). As a result, the governance mechanisms towards sustainable development might vary according to the scale at which they occur.

Furthermore, a feature governance for sustainable development at the global and local scale is the increasing participation of non-governmental organisations (Meadowcroft, 2007, 2005). For instance, the Glasgow Declaration is a commitment of various private tourism firms (see One Planet Tourism Programme, 2021). Clearly, this tendency follows the increasing awareness that governments are no longer capable by themselves to achieve sustainable development and, therefore, it is necessary to bring all types of stakeholders that hold some influence on societal transformations into the pursuit of sustainable development (Lange et al., 2013). In this regard, Voegtlin and Scherer (2017) argue that under adequate and concerted governance mechanisms, non-governmental institutions such as firms and corporations – and society – can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs through technological innovations. Nonetheless, while broad and encompassing participation is pivotal, it should not replace expertise. This refers to the fact that not all actors involved in governance are equally informed on sustainability related issues (Chang, 2001).

Considering the various actors and interests involved in governance for sustainable development, a promising strategy is *knowledge coproduction* (Rodela and Swartling, 2019). This multi-actor strategy calls for the consideration of all involved stakeholders' perspectives and interests and their incorporation in decision-making processes to implement sustainability-related initiatives. In this regard, knowledge coproduction between scientific and Indigenous actors is becoming more relevant with direct implications in sustainable development (see for instance David-Chavez

and Gavin, 2018; Hill et al., 2020; Klenk et al., 2017; Lyons et al., 2019; Makondo and Thomas, 2018). As Magni (2016, p. 3) indicates, Indigenous people are “valuable agents in maintaining global biodiversity and building resilience to climate change” and, therefore, their knowledge – accumulated over centuries – is pivotal to understand the various forms ecological and development challenges can be faced. Building on the important of Indigenous knowledge and the recognition of Indigenous people, Hill et al. (2020) proposes the idea of *adaptation pathways* as a decision-making process to create responses to climate change using knowledge co-production between Indigenous knowledge and mainstream science. According to their study, while co-production is key for effective adaptation pathways, there are some conditions needed for its applicability including nation-states’ recognition and inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in policymaking and Indigenous people in decision-making. As such, concrete actions by research institutions and policymakers to promote the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in policies and public strategies is much needed (David-Chavez and Gavin, 2018).

Despite its inherent intricacy, governance for sustainable development has been a key factor in overcoming global crises. One of the most significant crises (before the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic) in the last decades has been the global economic crisis that began in 2007 involving food, fuel, and finance (Bina, 2013; Bina and La Camera, 2011). These multi-scalar, complex, and interlinked crises resulted in a high rate of unemployment, a rise of food and fuel prices, and corporations’ bankruptcies (Newton and Cantarello, 2014). An additional factor to these crises was climate change as its impacts became more evident (Newton and Cantarello, 2014; Stern, 2007). This context demanded a joint response from governments and non-governmental actors to provide practical and effective solutions. As a result, a prominent strategy took the centre stage under the name of green economy. Green economy and related strategies such as green growth promoted investment in green technology, innovation, and resource-efficiency (Allen and Clouth, 2012; Newton and Cantarello, 2014).

### **2.3. Summary and conclusions**

This chapter has described and critically assessed sustainable development. This chapter began by briefly describing the historical development of sustainable development since 1987. Infused by two highly contested concepts such as development and sustainability, sustainable development has been subject to scrutiny. While, on the one hand, sustainable development has been praised because it represents a new paradigm that incorporates sustainability into policymaking and economic development, on the other hand, sustainable development has been accused of reducing sustainability challenges to a matter of lack of technological and scientific progress instead of drawing attention to root causes such as modes of production and consumption. However, it is undeniable that the progress made so far towards a more sustainable future would not have been possible without sustainable development as a global guideline.

Based on sustainable development, it is possible to reach four conclusions that will prove useful for the following chapters. First, sustainable development carry within the notion of change or a shift from a current scenario to scenarios where economic growth, environmental conservation, and social wellbeing are in balance. However, it is often the case that change is complicated, especially when it encompasses three highly complex dimensions. The second conclusion refers to governance.

Sustainable development depends on the interaction and power dynamics between various stakeholders from the public, private, and civil domain usually with vested and contested interests. As such, governance towards sustainable development has become a multi-actor arena where decisions require long-term commitments to break with unsustainable practices and embrace change.

Third, sustainable development requires innovation in order to achieve decoupling. Indeed, innovation in its various forms (for instance technological, organisations, institutional) is pivotal to reduce the environmental and social negative impact of economic growth. In that sense, innovation is an important ingredient to trigger a societal transformation. Fourth, as indicated throughout the chapter, it is important to acknowledge the geographical dimension of sustainable development. In fact, place-specific factors such as natural resources, local culture, local policies, and inter- and



intra-regional interactions can enable or hinder the implementation of sustainability-related measures and, consequently, affect the achievement of sustainable development. Depending on that, some regions could achieve sustainable development and prosperous conditions while, on the contrary, other regions can decline or get far from sustainable scenarios.

Given the ongoing debate that sustainable development entails, it is understandable that concepts that derive from them would also be under scrutiny. One of those concepts that is very pertinent for this thesis is tourism, or rather, sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism appears as an objective and as a process that incorporates sustainability principles into tourism activities. However, like sustainable development, sustainable tourism is complex, multi-actor, and highly geographical. Chapter 3 builds on the concepts and issues raised in this chapter to focus on the tourism sector.

## Chapter 3.

### From tourism to sustainable tourism

*“Rethinking one of the world’s major economic sectors – tourism – will not be easy. But we are already well on the way”*

*(Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary-General, 2022)*

#### 3.1. Introduction

Tourism is defined as “a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation” (UN and UNWTO, 2010, p. 1). Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has seen a rapid development due to innovation in technology, marketing, logistics, and communication, and global geopolitical processes such as time-space compression and globalisation. These factors have made tourism more affordable, easier, and faster. As a result, tourism has become an important driver of economic development for many regions such as, for example, the Margaret River region (Western Australia, Australia). However, the economic impact of tourism can have negative environmental and sociocultural consequences in tourist destinations. Sustainable tourism, rooted in sustainable development (Chapter 2), emerges as a potential strategy to balance the economic, environmental, and sociocultural impacts of tourism. As such, many destinations including the MRR have identified sustainable tourism as their main objective. In that sense, this second theoretical chapter of the thesis focuses on tourism and sustainable tourism.

This chapter uses a geographical perspective to analyse tourism as it helps to understand tourism as an industry that operates at multiple scales with other regional elements. This geographical perspective together with other concepts – useful for Chapter 8 – are discussed in section 3.2. Section 3.3 discusses the impacts and challenges of the tourism industry before critically addressing sustainable tourism and innovation towards sustainable tourism in sections 3.4 and 3.5, respectively. Finally, section 3.6 presents a summary and conclusions before preparing the ground for Chapter 4.

### 3.2. A geographical perspective of tourism

Tourism is an *intense geographic phenomenon* that involves complex and dynamic interactions between places and people in a complex and dynamic context at multiple scales (Mowforth and Munt, 2015; Shaw and Williams, 2004; Williams, 2009; Williams and Lew, 2014). As such, tourism depends on global and local industries, services, and trading networks as well as on social, political and environmental relationships between consumers and producers of the tourist experience (Hall, 2005). Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) explain that for the tourist experience to occur, four actors must interact: tourists, the tourism businesspeople, the government in charge of the destination, and the host community. According to Wall and Mathieson (2005) the tourist experience is the result of three stages. The first is before traveling which involves the various motivations behind the selection of a particular destination or destinations. The second one takes place at the destination and encompasses the different interactions between the tourist and the visited place. The third is a consequence of the second stage and refers to the direct or indirect impact of the visitors on the destination. The impact can be classified following the pillars of sustainable development (environmental, social, and economic). The various actors, interests, impacts, and industries involved in the tourism experience demonstrate that tourism is a complex phenomenon related to economic, political, social, geographical, and environmental processes taking place at the global and local – or destination – scale.

A key contributor to that complexity in the last decades has been globalisation – the process through which the world has become smaller (see for instance Dwyer and Čavlek, 2019; Timothy, 2019). As Timothy (2019, p. 2) explains, tourism is “a force of globalisation as well as a product of globalisation”. Clearly, the relationship between tourism and globalisation has further global and local ramifications. For instance, global neoliberal process – also fostered, to some extent, by globalisation – has empowered global corporations that operate at several destinations but centralise their revenue to a single entity leading to major socioeconomic inequalities at the destination level (Dwyer and Čavlek, 2019). Hence, tourism – as an intense geographic phenomenon – contributes to shaping uneven economic landscapes (Hall, 2005) by means of creating relationships between tourists, destinations, and

residents with environmental, social, and economic implications that vary within and across scales (Williams and Lew, 2014).

As such, the analysis of tourism requires the adoption of multi-disciplinary perspectives (Mowforth and Munt, 2015; Shaw and Williams, 2004; Williams, 2009). While a number of research areas have definitely contributed to the better understanding of tourism within tourism studies (see the various entries in Lowry, 2017), this thesis builds on a geographical perspective on tourism. *Tourism geographies* focuses on this perspective. Tourism geographies as a concept and a research area encompasses the many geographical approaches to tourism including approaches from economic geography (mainly used by this thesis), cultural geography, political geography, and environmental geography. One of the main aims of tourism geographies is to understand the spatial and temporal changes that occur to the environment, society, and economy as well as on the tourists' experiences as a result of tourism (Nepal, 2009). This is important since, as Saarinen (2014) explains, tourism fosters the transformation of regions into places – or destinations – that are attractive for potential visitors. That transformation involves power dynamics, governance, and initiatives to manage the impacts of tourism on the destination (Saarinen, 2004). Thus, a geographical perspective on tourism is useful to, for instance, understand how those diverse interests shape destinations over time.

A geographical perspective on tourism, particularly an economic geography perspective, is also helpful to determine whether tourism is an industry or not (see, for instance, Debbage and Daniels, 1998; Leiper, 1990; Smith, 1998, 1991; Williams, 2009). Economic geographers, especially focusing on the supply-side of tourism, argue that tourism, rather than an industry, is an umbrella term for all the industries that meet the needs of travellers such as travel, transportation, accommodations, food establishments, shops, entertainment, hospitality, and other components (Davidson, 2004; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009; Smith, 1998, 1994; Williams, 2009). To understand that tourism is not necessarily an industry but that its supply-side can be addressed as one, allows researchers to conceptualise the supply-side of tourism as a process. Smith (1994) proposes a four-step process through which multiple elements, infrastructures, and industries contribute to the production of the tourism experience. As Debbage and Daniels (1998, p. 23) argued, tourism is “no single

product but, rather, a wide range of products and services that interact to provide an opportunity to fulfil a tourist experience that comprises both tangible and intangible parts”. Therefore, building on a geographical perspective on tourism, this thesis refers to the tourism sector or industry as the supply-side of tourism that encompasses a series of interactions, not necessarily constant, of various industries and sectors in a destination to provide a large range of commodities (products and services) to visitors. Figure 4 reflects such conceptualisation. It is important to mention that the operating sectors in that figure are not the only ones and could vary according to the destination.

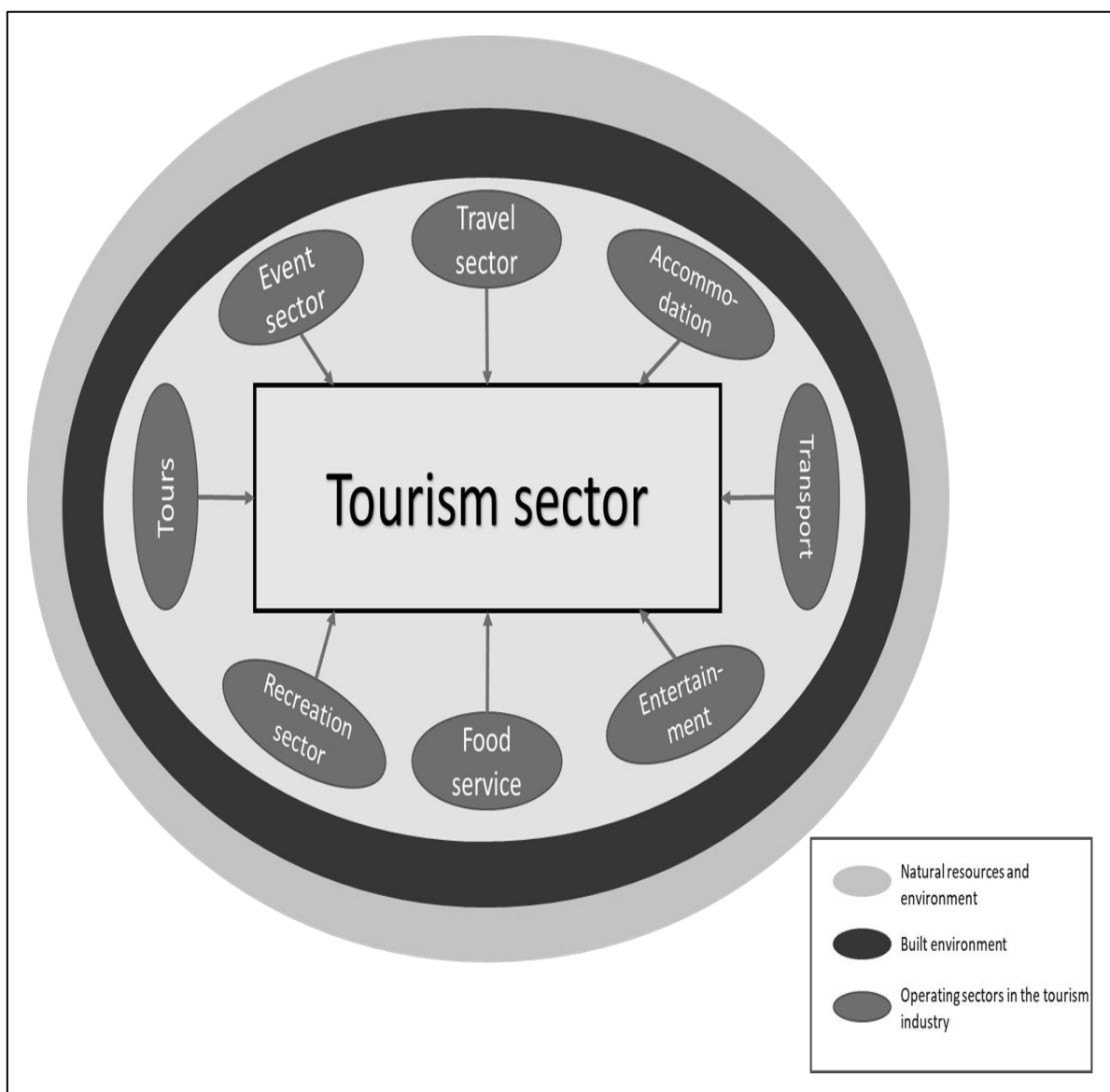


Figure 4: The components of tourism as an unconventional industry, based on Goeldner and Ritchie (2009)

Based on the figure above, it is possible to identify destinations where the tourism sector tends to establish strong links with other regional industries such as wine, whisky, sports, tea, events, and others. As a result, there are destinations that market themselves as wine-tourism or whisky-tourism destinations (for instance, the Napa Valley in the USA, and Scotland respectively) in relation to the main type of tourism taking place. It could also be the case that multiple types of industries influence the tourism sector in the same destination. Certainly, classifying tourism is a highly complex task that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, this subsection opts for a practical approach and addresses the types of tourism that are the most pertinent for the area of study, the MRR. In that sense, Table 3 presents relevant features of wine-tourism, sun and surf-tourism, nature-based tourism, ecotourism, Indigenous tourism, and high-end tourism.

From a geographical perspective, it is possible to notice that each type of tourism mentioned above depends on place-specific factors that attract – or deter – visitors. One approach that considers these place-specific factors – together with visitors' motivations – to explore the reasons behind the selection of a destination is Dann's (1977) push and pull factors framework which is still used in recent research (see for instance Fraiz et al., 2020; Güzel et al., 2020; Klenosky, 2002). According to this framework, push factors are those that motivate tourists to leave their home, whereas pull factors are the elements that attract tourists to a particular destination. In that sense, push factors are often associated with peoples' psyche and define whether they decide to travel or not. Among the most common push factors are novelty, social interaction, prestige, escape from everyday context, visiting friends and relatives (VFR), education, and medical reasons. In turn, pull factors reflect the destination's attributions and are often used in marketing strategies. As such, pull factors aim to explain the reasons behind the selection of a destination instead of others (Dann, 1977; Fraiz et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2003; Prayag and Hosany, 2014). Importantly, Kim and Lee (2002) imply that push and pull factors relate to the demand and supply side of tourism respectively. While push and pull factors are complementary to understand tourists' motivations (Klenosky, 2002; Prayag and Hosany, 2014), this thesis mainly focuses on pull factors since they are place-specific (Klenosky, 2002).

Table 3: Relevant types of tourism pertinent to the Margaret River region, based on various authors (see below)

Types	Description	Examples
Wine-tourism	Visitation to grape or wine regions mainly motivated by wine-related experiences and products. Wine-tourism is often accompanied by complementary products (gourmet food, cheese, meat) and services (tours and tastings). Wine-tourism is highly dependent on place-specific factors such as climate, resources, and entrepreneurial culture.	Tours to cellar doors, vineyards, and restaurants. Glamping at vineyards is becoming popular in some wine-regions.
Sun and surf-tourism	Visitation driven by sun and surfing (and related sports) to coastal areas located in urban or rural settings. Sun and surf-tourism includes surf events, competitions, and specialised shops. In regions where surfing is emerging it is possible to identify cultural changes. Sun and surf-tourism is highly dependent of place-specific factors such as physical landscape, and climate.	Surfing, bodyboarding, windsurfing. Surfing lodges. Surfing schools. Surf-related events. Beach activities
Nature-based tourism	Visitation driven by nature and the outdoors from passive to consumptive activities. Its broad base allows misinterpretation and is often used as a label for tourism activities that do not necessarily sustainable. Thus, nature-based tourism could be susceptible of greenwashing.	Sightseeing of geological forms or botanical gardens, hiking, climbing, hunting, angling.
Ecotourism	By contrast to nature-based tourism, ecotourism aims to promote the conservation of the natural areas where it takes place (often protected areas). It includes educational and conservation programmes. Since ecotourism often brings visitors to previously undisturbed areas, it requires careful planning to mitigate socioenvironmental impacts.	Tourism products aimed to share profits with local hosts, enhance natural resources, restore ecosystems.
Indigenous tourism	Rather than turning Indigenous people and culture into the focus of attraction for visitors, Indigenous tourism refers to the management of Indigenous people' traditions and land managed and controlled by them for visitors.	The Māori tourism council in New Zealand.
High-end tourism	Refers to the transformation of places into destinations suited to the demand of elite consumers. Although it is often associated with development and conservation in rural areas, this tourism creates elitist destinations with low contribution to the local economy and environment. For instance, these destinations contribute to low-wage labour.	Creation of natural protected areas in zones with hectares under private property in Mexico and Argentina.

(Ávila-García and Sánchez, 2012; Buckley, 2002; Carlsen, 2004; Carr et al., 2016; Coghlan and Buckley, 2013; Hall et al., 2002; Kuenzi and McNeely, 2008; Martin and Assenov, 2012; Matysek and Kriwoken, 2003; Pastor et al., 2020; Wolf et al., 2019)

Indeed, scholars provide several examples of pull-factors mainly related to natural, cultural, and heritage resources at the destination (Chen and Chen, 2015; Kassean and Gassita, 2013; Kim et al., 2003). However, it is possible to argue that existing pull factors are also a result of decision-making processes that prioritise some destinations attributes over others. These decision-making processes could follow economic, environment, social, cultural, and marketing influences (see for instance Fraiz et al., 2020; Gilbert and Terrata, 2001; Prayag and Hosany, 2014). As a result, in addition to natural, cultural, and heritage tourism resources, pull factors also include access infrastructure, safety, environmental quality, and social stability (Chen and Chen, 2015; Fraiz et al., 2020; Kassean and Gassita, 2013). This is important for two reasons. First, while pull factors attract visitors, they also can deter some other visitors (see Gilbert and Terrata, 2001). Second, pull factors and the way they are marketed contribute to the creation of an image and brand for the destination (Kassean and Gassita, 2013; Prayag and Hosany, 2014).

Destination image and brand play an important role in the selection of a destination although debates about their definition are still ongoing (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Blain et al., 2005; Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike, 2002; Tasci and Gartner, 2007; Tasci and Kozak, 2006). While this thesis does not aim to directly address this debate, it does consider necessary to indicate their relevance in destinations and tourism sector. Destination image implies a complex process – influenced by tangible (pull factors that are common among and unique to a destination) and intangible aspects (beliefs, impressions, hearsay, mental constructs) – that leads to the various views that visitors have about a given destination (Day, 2011; Ruiz-Real et al., 2020; Tasci and Gartner, 2007). As such, “destination image is in the eye of the beholder” (Day, 2011, p. 271). Based on that, destination branding aims to position and differentiate the destination image (of a destination) from other destination images (Blain et al., 2005; Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). The destination branding allows a destination and its tourism sector to improve its competitiveness based on its uniqueness which is often done through marketing strategies (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). Tasci and Kozak’s (2006) indicate that a positive destination image contributes to a strong, well-positioned, and distinct destination brand as well as the other way around. As such, tourism stakeholders in a destination, such as authorities, destination management organisations, corporations, and local



organisations, should collaborate to promote a distinctive tourism branding which, in turn, entails *inter alia* to manage sustainably the destination's main tourism resources. As a result, destination branding can improve visitors' behaviour and overall experience (Blain et al., 2005; Tasci and Kozak, 2006).

### **3.3. Tourism as a regional development driver**

Tourism promotes development worldwide. As such, tourism is often considered as a key regional development driver in destinations (see for instance, Niewiadomski, 2017; UNWTO and UNEP, 2012; Williams, 2009). Despite the complexity that the term *development* entails (see discussion in Chapter 2), it is clear that tourism manifests as a force of change in each host destination where it takes place (see for instance, Williams, 2009). Niewiadomski (2017) lists five main ways in which tourism can promote development in a given destination: as a foreign currency generator, as a source of income for residents, as a job generator, as an allure for international investment, and as an agent of regeneration whether urban or rural. All those factors contribute to shaping destinations in particular manners following the diverse interests involved in the provision of the tourist experience – as discussed in the previous section (see also Saarinen, 2004). Those changes in the destinations are reflected in physical terms such as infrastructure for accommodation and transport, and economic terms such as the creation of direct and indirect jobs (Williams, 2009). Yet, considering that tourism depends on the local context, tourism-led changes are not always positive which leads to uneven spaces of production and consumption – even within the same destination (Hall, 2005; Niewiadomski, 2017). As Williams (2009) explains, there are benefits and costs attached to the influence of tourism in destinations.

A geographical perspective in tourism allows research to analyse the ways tourism shapes destinations. Considering the characteristics of the area of study (the Margaret River region) – briefly mentioned in Chapter 1 – this subsection focuses on rural (or peripheral) regions driven by tourism (or leisure). Here it is important to indicate that the thesis uses rural as a shorthand for peripheral regions. Peripheral regions or destinations are those that are beyond the borders of metropolitan areas (Carson et al., 2014; Wittmayer et al., 2014). Likewise, since the relationship between leisure and tourism is out of the scope of this thesis, it suffices to indicate

that this thesis considers leisure and tourism (and recreation) as overlapping and highly interrelated concepts based on Williams's (2009) and Meekes et al. (2023).

Given their location, rural regions face various challenges including weak industrial and service sectors, small markets, reduced access to financial and technological assets, and low level of high-skilled labour (Mayer and Baumgartner, 2014; Meekes et al., 2023). Therefore, it is understandable that peripheral regions, especially those with low population density and attractive leisure qualities (for example, natural or cultural amenities or space of rural idyll), focus on tourism as a means for development (Meekes et al., 2017; Walmsley, 2003). For instance, Australian rural regions often see tourism as a panacea for development supported by increasing levels of foreign investment and employment (Walmsley, 2003). As a result, tourism promotes the emergence of tourist enclaves, resorts, and zones, depending on the place-specific factors in each destination (Williams, 2009). For instance, several coastal resorts have emerged in the MRR given its scenic coastal landscapes (Sanders, 2000). However, seeing tourism as the panacea for rural destination can lead to issues within destinations such as the commodification of the countryside and socioenvironmental conflicts (Walmsley, 2003).

Meekes et al. (2017a) argue that the development of tourism in rural regions is a highly complex process. They list three aspects. First, given that tourism is an appealing sector in economic terms, rural regions witness the emergence of several tourism firms that compete against each other overlooking possible mutual and regional gains leading to the fragmentation of the tourism sector. Second, tourism development often aims to increase the number of visitors which, in turn, increases the risk to disrupt the amenities and social fabric of rural regions. And third, considering that tourism is not the only sector in a region, promoting tourism can influence and be influenced by the development of other sectors with positive and negative results. Taking into account this complexity, planning appears as an important factor for preventing the degradation of rural landscapes while promoting adequate management of rural destinations (Dana et al., 2014; Hartman and De Roo, 2013; Meekes et al., 2017; Ravenscroft and Reeves, 1999).

Planning – defined as “any action taken by either government or other actors with the goal of influencing future developments towards a desired direction (Meekes et al., 2023) – can contribute to providing infrastructure only aimed at visitors but also residents, reducing the fragmentation of the tourism sector, better redistribution of economic benefits of tourism, developing new tourist places, and rejuvenating old tourist places (Williams, 2009). Planning can also stimulate entrepreneurship in destinations by developing policies that are robust enough to protect destinations from external negative impacts and flexible enough to encourage novel initiatives (Hartman and De Roo, 2013). Despite its benefits, planning is a highly complex and uncertain process (Meekes et al., 2023, 2020), mainly because it depends on various actors at various levels (for instance, national, regional, and local) with multiple interests (Dana et al., 2014; Ivars Baidal, 2004; Meekes et al., 2023). Hence, planning for tourism should be an open-ended process able to co-evolve with other sectors and organisations, and to adapt to changing circumstances (Hartman and De Roo, 2013; Meekes et al., 2017).

Hence, while tourism is an important contributor to the economic development of rural destinations, it requires adequate planning in order to bring positive physical and economic changes to the host population without endangering the local natural capital. Clearly, planning is pivotal for balancing economic, social, and environmental dimensions within a destination.

### **3.4. Impacts and challenges of the tourism sector**

Destinations largely depend on their natural, cultural, and heritage resources as well as on its image and brand to attract visitors. Indeed, several destinations develop strategies to become unique and distinctive from other destinations. However, as they get more popular and visitation numbers increase, the impact of the tourism sector tends to become more evident. This scenario is worsened by global challenges such as climate change, especially in destinations that rely on particular climate patterns such as coastal or skiing resorts (Bigano et al., 2005). By the same token, recently many destinations worldwide – including the MRR – also had to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic with different outcomes some less detrimental than others.

To address the impact of tourism is not a simple task due to the complex nature of tourism (already addressed in the previous section). Wall and Mathieson (2005) argue that discerning between the impact of tourism and other pre-existing or parallel industries is challenging. Plus, the availability and quality of data about the tourism sector is usually low in many destinations. In many cases, data is available at the national level but not at the destination level (Williams, 2009). Nevertheless, the fact that tourism has an impact at the global, national, and destination level is undeniable (see, for instance, Pforr et al., 2021; Ruddy et al., 2015; Theodorou, 2004; Wall and Mathieson, 2005). A plausible approach to the impacts of tourism is to classify them into environmental, social, and economic (see, for instance, Creaney and Niewiadomski, 2016; Stoffelen and Ioannides, 2022). Table 4 presents a list of key examples of tourism impact that are relevant for this thesis. It is possible to notice that this classification is almost the same as the pillars of sustainable development (see Chapter 2). This is helpful because it demonstrates the many trade-offs occurring in the tourism sector raising awareness about the necessity to promote measures towards sustainable development (Lenzen et al., 2018; UNWTO, 2018).

The environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism are often interrelated (Stoffelen and Ioannides, 2022) which reflects the complexity and trade-offs of sustainable development addressed in the previous chapter. For instance, it is possible to notice in various studies about the impacts of tourism on destinations (see Beeharry et al., 2021; Borg, 2022; Creaney and Niewiadomski, 2016; Flood Chávez and Niewiadomski, 2022; Reid, 2003; Wesley and Pforr, 2010) that many environmental and social impacts at the destination level are a result of the economic growth of tourism at the destination and global level. In this case, it is important to consider that tourism takes place in the context of globalisation, with uneven and unequal relations of power (Mowforth and Munt, 2015). Another important element to consider is that the impacts of tourism are unevenly distributed in space (Hall, 2005) and, therefore, are influenced by place-specific factors such as local culture, physical environment, economic conditions, and destination branding. However, tourism itself is also subject of global pressures that are beyond the global tourism sector such as climate change and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4: Relevant environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism, based on various authors (see below)

Type of impact	Impact	Description
Environmental	Contribution to greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions	Tourism contribution to, for instance, global CO2 emissions is around 5.2 to 12.5 %, with air transport being one of the main factors.
	Pressure on resources	Tourists can exhibit high levels of consumption of key destination resources such as water, food, energy.
	Pressure on land ecosystems	Tourism can lead to habitat loss due to over development of sensitive areas, increased pollution, and introduction of invasive species.
	Investment on conservation	Tourism can contribute to the creation of conservation programmes at the destination.
	Creation of direct and indirect jobs	Tourism increases the demand of local labour – although it is not necessarily under adequate labour conditions.
Social	Cultural interaction	Tourism favours the interaction of different cultures resulting, for instance, on intercultural knowledge and preservation of local heritage and culture.
	Housing speculation	Tourism can lead to an increasing demand for short-term and holiday accommodations to the detriment of residents' and hospitality workers' demand for long-term housing.
	Socio-environmental conflicts	The objectives of the tourism sector in some destinations can oppose to the interests of local residents leading to different types of confrontations.
	Overtourism	Overtourism refers to the host residents' perception of large amounts of visitors beyond the destination's limit. It is the result of poor management and planning of the tourism sector. Overtourism often results on competition for local infrastructure and services between visitors and residents.
Economic	Driver of economic development	Tourism contributes to positive economic results at the global, national, and destination scales. As a development driver, tourism contributes to bridging regional destinations with national government.
	Diversification of local economy	Tourism encourages the emergence of related economic activities such as food and beverage, and retail shops.

(Almeyda Zambrano et al., 2010; Becken and Simmons, 2002; Beraldo Souza et al., 2019; Blake et al., 2008; Borg, 2022; Creaney and Niewiadomski, 2016; Gjerald, 2005; González, 2018; Gössling et al., 2011; Hall, 2010a; Jafari, 2001; Lenzen et al., 2018; Pforr et al., 2017, 2021; Ritty et al., 2015, 2015; Stoffelen and Ioannides, 2022; Theocharus, 2004; UNWTO et al., 2018; UNWTO and UNEP, 2012; Wall and Mathieson, 2005; Wesley and Pforr, 2010)

Considering that tourism depends on the same resources that it partially depletes is a complex paradox (Rutty et al., 2015), an additional ingredient to this paradox is climate change. Santos-Lacueva et al. (2019) indicate that the relationship between climate change and tourism is bidirectional. On the one hand, climate change represents a threat to many destinations (Caldeira and Kastenholz, 2018). Indeed, climate change induces major changes, such as changes in climate patterns, increasing sea level, and frequency of natural disasters, that could result in environmental degradation of ecological sensitive destinations (Lenzen et al., 2018). On the other hand, tourism, as a global sector, produces significant greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and therefore contributes to climate change (Gössling and Scott, 2018; Mace et al., 2005; UNWTO and UNEP, 2012). Therefore, this complex interaction represents a massive challenge to the tourism sector at the global and destination scales. For instance, a number of destinations are developing policies to increase environmental awareness and mitigate the impacts of climate change (Santos-Lacueva et al., 2019). Destination pledges that raise awareness of climate change are a good example here (Albrecht and Raymond, 2022). Yet, a number of tourism patterns seem to be persistent.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNWTO (2019) forecasted that international tourist arrivals would grow 3 to 4 % as a result of increasing air travel capacity, facilitation of visa procedures, and a growing economy. Indeed, most of the tourism success depends on air travel and economic growth (Hall, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). This reflects the challenge climate change represents to the tourism sector and the urgent need to achieve impact decoupling (Lenzen et al., 2018). Weaver (2011) recommends the adoption of mitigation measures to tackle the challenge of climate change such as green or clean energy transport, habitat restoration, carbon sequestration programmes, and local biodiversity conservation projects. In turn, economic assessment of tourism development projects should encompass the costs of mitigating the impact of climate change (Hall, 2010b). Another important measure to address the challenge of climate change is leadership. Gössling and Scott (2018) argue that leadership is pivotal for the tourism sector to implement the necessary measures to reduce air travel emissions and commit to the Paris Agreement.

In addition to climate change which has clearly created a pressurising environment for tourism at the destination and global level, COVID-19 pandemic has also become an important challenge to tourism worldwide as it abruptly stopped global travel and tourism. The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry as a result of travel bans and restrictions to tourism-related businesses has been undeniable (UNWTO, 2020). As Gössling (2021, p. 1) indicates: “tourism is especially susceptible to measures to counteract pandemics because of restricted mobility and social distancing”. Restaurants and hotels globally have seen a sharp decline in occupancy rates, customer numbers, and revenues (Gursoy and Chi, 2020), and destinations reliant mainly on international visitors have nearly become *ghost towns* (Haywood, 2020). Nevertheless, several tourism scholars have approached the current pandemic from a different perspective. They argue that the pandemic provides an opportunity to change tourism (Brouder, 2020; Brouder et al., 2020; Haywood, 2020; Ioannides and Gyimóthy, 2020; Nepal, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020; Prideaux et al., 2020).

COVID-19 has given tourism the opportunity to reset and to address regional challenges in new and more sustainable ways (Brouder, 2020; Nepal, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020). It has also allowed tourism destinations and their residents to realise how important are visitors for the region’s development (Haywood, 2020). For instance, Nepal (2020, p. 648) provides some suggestions on how to reorientate adventure tourism and some of them could be applied to the whole tourism industry:

- Do not rely only on few tourism markets,
- Improve tourism infrastructure and service provisions particularly at remoted located destinations,
- Regulate the number of tourism entrepreneurs to assure quality over quantity,
- Diversify tourism experiences including cultural and natural ones,
- Improve the skills of the tourism labour force to perform and offer sustainable practices and experiences.

The massive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was considered as a potential transformational force that could represent a shift in global tourism. As such, the recovery paths in the aftermath of the pandemic are expected to follow different

trajectories ranging from primarily economic to more socio-environmentally aware ones (Brouder, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020). The latter can certainly lead to more sustainable forms of tourism; however, sustainable scenarios cannot be a guaranteed outcome of the pandemic. As Hall et al. (2020) argue, in the past other pandemic outbreaks (at regional scale) impacted on tourism without changing it. Hence, without a strong institutional and governmental commitment it is likely that the tourism industry could follow a business-as-usual trajectory, yet it is still challenging to reach to a definitive conclusion. Although, as argued by Niewiadomski and Brouder (2022), it appears that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism has not been able to transform the sector. Precisely, building on the existing literature on COVID-19 and tourism, Chapter 9 focuses on the impact of the pandemic and the challenge that it represented to the tourism industry in the MRR.

### **3.5. Sustainable tourism: a solution?**

Tourism appears as a sector with the potential to contribute to a societal transformation and a more sustainable future although, under its current arrangements, it partially contributes to less sustainable scenarios (see for instance Lenzen et al., 2018; Santos-Lacueva et al., 2019). In that sense, it is necessary to understand tourism as a potential driver to sustainable development. As a result, calls to incorporate sustainability principles into tourism have emerged. For instance, Prosser (1994) suggested that including sustainability into the tourism sector operations could contribute to improve tourists satisfaction, and raise environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity. A number of destinations, including the Margaret River region (see, for instance, Shire of Augusta Margaret River, 2022), have responded to that call and taken measures related to sustainability such as policies and strategies that promote energy savings, recycling, efficient waste management, reduction of emissions, and residents' wellbeing (Mihalic, 2016). The incorporation of sustainability into the tourism sector has triggered the debate about the balance that should exist between tourism's contribution to economic growth and the socioenvironmental impacts of tourism.

This debate can be traced back to the 1970s when academics started worrying about the impacts of mass tourism in the European Alps and other destinations such as Mallorca (Aall, 2014). This concern led to the emergence of sustainable tourism



as a concept in the 1990s soon after the release of *Our Common Future* in 1987 (Hardy et al., 2002). Sustainable tourism is defined as a tourism aware of its impact on the three dimensions of sustainability that addresses the needs of visitors, industries, environment, and host communities (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017). The concept of sustainable tourism has been subject of discussions at the UN many summits and conferences such as Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the World Conference of Sustainable Tourism in Lanzarote in 1995, and Rio+20 in 2012 (Pforr and Reiser, 2017). More recently, UN members have committed to transform tourism into a net zero sector by 2050 following the Paris Agreement (UNWTO, 2021). Importantly, sustainable tourism entails the incorporation of sustainable development principles in all types of tourism, including mass tourism (Pforr and Reiser, 2017). In praxis, sustainable tourism provides a framework to guide tourism practices, policies, operations, and management in all types of destination (for instance rural, urban, coastal, and insular destinations) (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005).

Clearly, sustainable tourism is related to sustainable development. Since sustainable tourism focuses on the conservation and enhancement of natural resources, generation of green jobs, economic growth, and protection of local culture (Hall, 2019; UNWTO and UNEP, 2012), it is possible to establish that sustainable tourism is key to achieve sustainable development. As such, UN agencies and multilateral organisations, including the World Bank, IMF, UNEP, and UNDP, identify tourism as an important economic sector that can contribute to a global green transition (UNWTO and UNEP, 2012). Hence, sustainable tourism can reduce trade-offs and even promote decoupling between economic growth and the environmental and social dimensions. For instance, empirical evidence from European countries suggests that investment in sustainable tourism results in increasing revenues in the tourism sector and, more importantly, decreasing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Paramati et al., 2018). In the same vein, investment in sustainable tourism can also reduce the cost of energy, improve waste management, enhance the natural capital, and recover cultural heritage in destinations (UNWTO and UNEP, 2012). Table 5 presents the direct relationship between sustainable tourism and the UN SDGs and subgoals with a focus on developed countries given the scope of this thesis.

Table 5: Relationship between Sustainable Tourism and the UN SDGs, adapted from UNWTO (2018)

<b>Sustainable tourism pillars</b>	<b>Related SDGs and subgoals</b>	<b>Relationship</b>
Sustainable economic growth	8 – 8.9	Sustainable tourism can contribute to the creation of direct and indirect jobs in host destinations with adequate working conditions.
	9 – 9.1	Sustainable tourism can foster the development of inter- and intraregional connectivity resulting in better conditions for transborder communities.
Social inclusion, job generation and poverty reduction	1 – 1.4	As a people-centred industry, sustainable tourism can help poor and vulnerable communities to access new technology, financial services, and public services.
	4 – 4.3, 4.4, 4.5	By means of creating more and better jobs, sustainable tourism can ensure access to relevant education to create skilled labour.
	8 – 8.8, 8.9	In addition to creating jobs, sustainable tourism can promote better working environments, especially for migrant workers.
	10 – 10.2	As a people-centred industry, sustainable tourism can create the necessary conditions for the empowerment and inclusion of people regardless of age, sex, race, or economic status
Resources efficiency, environmental protection, and climate change	6 – 6.3, 6.4	Considering the impact of tourism on water bodies including pollution, sustainable tourism can foster the reduction pollutants to water sources and improve the efficient use of water.
	7 – 7.3	Sustainable tourism can directly contribute towards transitions to green energy in the accommodation and transport sector.
	8 – 8.4	Sustainable tourism can promote resource efficiency in consumption and production through, for instance, ecotourism or encouraging shifts in modes of transport (train instead of plane).
	11 – 11.1, 11.4, 11.6	Sustainable tourism in urban environments can contribute to maintain an adequate amount of affordable housing, improve waste management, and protect cultural and natural heritage.
	12 – 12.b	Sustainable tourism can increase awareness in visitors and tourism firms about the impact of tourism on the environment as well as its relationship with climate change.
	13 – 13.3	In addition to raising awareness about climate change in visitors and host communities, sustainable tourism can help to develop adaptation strategies to the impacts of climate change.
	14 – 14.1, 14.2, 14.5, 14.7	Sustainable tourism can reduce marine pollution, increase resilience of coastal communities, promote the creation of coastal and marine conservation areas, and foster sustainable management of marine resources.
	15 – 15.1, 15.2, 15.5	Sustainable tourism can promote the conservation of biodiversity-rich areas under sustainable management as well as mitigate the impact of tourism in key land ecosystems.
Cultural values, diversity, and heritage	11 – 11.4	Sustainable tourism can promote the conservation of cultural heritage located in urban and peri-urban areas.
	12 – 12.b	Sustainable tourism can provide opportunities to create jobs related to cultural manifestations as cultural tourism.
Mutual understanding, peace, and security	16 – 16.2, 16.5, 16.2	Sustainable tourism can, first, contribute to end tourism activities related to violence and oppression, second, promote actions against corruption in host destination, and third, foster inclusive participatory mechanisms at all level.

Due to the relationship between sustainable tourism and sustainable development, both are subject to similar criticisms. For instance, Hall (2019) indicates that sustainable tourism is taking a similar technocratic and managerial approach as sustainable development. Like sustainable development, sustainable tourism aims to promote behavioural changes through policies and incremental innovation rather than focusing on the structural and radical changes required. This leads Lyon and Hunter-Jones (2019) to argue that sustainable tourism is another tool through which the neoliberal discourse installs in destinations. They explain that the neoliberal discourse promotes a tendency to focus on economic growth rather than on the other pillars of sustainable development resulting in a limited capacity of sustainable tourism to contribute to sustainable development. In a similar vein, Higgins-Desbiolles (2018, p. 157) wonders “if sustainable tourism is about sustaining tourism and less about sustainable development?”. According to Sharpley (2000), sustainable tourism works as a mechanism to promote economic growth under the discourse of sustainability. Even the alternatives that have emerged under the sustainable tourism discourse, such as ecotourism, soft tourism, low-impact tourism, and responsible tourism, are dependent on economic growth (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Liu, 2003). As such, achieving sustainable tourism appears elusive in a context of neoliberalism and consumerism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010).

By the same token, an additional criticism about sustainable tourism is related to mass tourism. The UNWTO considers that all types of tourism are susceptible to sustainable tourism, including mass tourism. Considering the impact of mass tourism already addressed in subsection 3.3.2 (for example changes of land use, overexploitation of cultural resources), it is a massive task for sustainable tourism to create sustainable alternatives for mass tourism (Liu, 2003; Naumov and Green, 2016). This is particularly more difficult in regions that have a strong economic dependency on tourism or that have identified tourism-based economic growth as one of its key objectives (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Liu, 2003). Even those destinations branded as green or sustainable, such as Costa Rica, depend largely on the revenue from mass tourism to fund their sustainable tourism activities (Liu, 2003). In that sense, it is understandable that many destinations, or regions aiming to become attractive destinations, invest in infrastructure and other tourism projects that invite large number of visitors leading to mass tourism (Hall, 2009; Higgins-

Desbiolles et al., 2019). Under these circumstances, the broad definition of sustainable tourism becomes a tool to appease the consequences of mass tourism recurring to mainstream sustainable practices such as recycling, community outreach programmes, and eco-labels (Weaver, 2007).

Considering these criticisms, scholars have questioned if it is actually possible to implement sustainable tourism *in praxis*. For instance, Sharpley (2014a) argues that the complex and unconventional nature of tourism is a hurdle for the implementation of sustainable tourism. He explains that it would be almost impossible to implement sustainability measures into all the different sectors and industries involved with tourism. Although, he acknowledges that it could be possible in some destinations with few industries involved with the tourism sector. Yet, factors such as globalisation make difficult to identify destinations with a tourism sector not involved with other regional and extra-regional industries (Dwyer and Čavlek, 2019). Wall and Mathieson (2005) indicate that the sustainability of tourism would implicate less sustainable scenarios for other industries. They argue that sustainable tourism would compete for resources, such as land, labour, capital, and investment, with other industries and sectors that are seeking to become sustainable as well. For instance, the creation of conservation areas in the Zambezi region in Namibia resulted in the displacement of local organic farmers (Breul et al., 2021). Hence, even in the best possible scenario, sustainable tourism implies trade-offs between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

While the criticism is, to some extent, understandable, it is important to pay attention to the progress and benefits that sustainable tourism entails. As UN and UNWTO (2010, p. 79) indicate, “the growing awareness about the negative impacts associated with certain tourism practices, along with the general acceptance of the principle of sustainable development, has led the world community to reassess tourism activity in the light of its long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability.” In that sense, sustainable tourism has become a vehicle to bring development by means of improving the environment, social, and economic conditions of destinations (Sharpley, 2014a). Sustainable tourism does not only bring development but also intergenerational justice which is one of the objectives of sustainable development. Indeed, sustainable tourism entails the conservation of

cultural and ecological resources of destinations which would ensure that future generations enjoy them (Timothy, 2014). As such, several destinations such as Venice, Barcelona, Palau, Bhutan, and the Margaret River region, have been adopting sustainable tourism measures to, for example, address the impact of climate change, mitigate the socioenvironmental impacts of tourism, prevent economic decline, and attract environmentally aware visitors (McGrath and Lipman, 2016). Yet, it is necessary that relevant actors, such as the UNWTO, take a more active role to ensure that the tourism sector becomes fully sustainable and commits to the Paris Agreement objectives (Scott et al., 2016).

Considering that sustainable tourism is rooted in sustainable development, it is possible to argue that innovation plays an important role as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Despite tourism not being considered as a highly innovative sector, it is possible to identify novelty in the tourism sector. For instance, booking processes are more dynamic or some destinations offer new experiences such as augmented reality (see Jingen Liang and Elliot, 2021). Carmigniani et al. (2011, p. 3) define augmented reality as “a real-time direct or indirect view of a physical real-world environment that has been enhanced/augmented by adding virtual computer-generated information to it”. Yet, considering the impacts of the tourism sector, it is pertinent to ask about the role of innovation in the transition towards sustainable tourism.

### **3.6. Innovation towards sustainable tourism**

As discussed in Chapter 2, innovation plays an important role in the achievement of sustainable development. Hence, it can be inferred that innovation is also key to achieve sustainable tourism. As UNWTO and UNEP (2012) indicate, innovation in tourism is necessary to prevent or minimise the negative impacts of tourism activity on destinations. Considering that innovation – and entrepreneurship – are deeply influenced by place-specific factors such as labour skills and knowledge (Debbage, 2018), it can be expected that every tourist destination has different types of innovation. Nonetheless, tourism has been often assumed as a low-technological and not very innovative sector (Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a; Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). Hence, it is important to break the technological bias in innovation research to address the complex nature of innovation in tourism.

Grasping the complex nature of innovation in tourism requires a broad focus. Fayos-Solà and Cooper (2019a) indicate that innovation in tourism is pivotal for the survival of the sector especially in a context marked by climate change. They argue that while innovation in tourism (and other sectors) is often associated with private entities, it has been proven that the public sector has been more relevant in the emergence and implementation of innovative measures in tourism. As Bramwell (2012) indicates, the public sector is often interested in the positioning, marketing, and successful operation of the tourism sector. Buijtendijk et al. (2018) argue that marketing strategies and behaviour-based policies to promote sustainable tourism in the Netherlands were funded by the national government. In an effort to understand better the innovative nature of tourism, Booyens and Rogerson (2016a) identified seven different types of tourism innovations (see Table 6) (see also Hjalager, 2010).

Most of these innovations tend to be incremental and limited to a particular tourism sector (accommodation, catering, transport). However, Booyens and Rogerson (2016a) indicate that cumulative incremental innovations could lead to radical changes in tourism destinations. In the same vein, Fayos-Solà and Cooper (2019a) identify in the tourism sector three types of innovation. First, institutional and governance innovation that serve as catalyst for technological and scientific innovation; second, reengineering innovation that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of processes in the tourism sector; and third, disruptive innovation. The latter plays an important role in breaking with established paradigms and could influenced a shift towards more sustainable tourism scenarios. Booyens and Rogerson (2016a) highlighted that structural and social innovations could have an impact on the entire destination rather than on particular tourism sectors. The nature of these type of innovations that encompass the entire destination are referred to as local innovation systems or tourism innovation systems (Booyens and Rogerson, 2016b, 2016a; Fayos-Solà and Cooper, 2019b). These innovation systems required the participation and interaction of various stakeholders within the existing structures embedded in the destination. They also require support from research-informed actors and adequate governance to promote the transfer of knowledge which is pivotal for the emergence of innovation (Fayos-Solà and Cooper, 2019b).

Table 6: Types of innovation in tourism, based on Booyens and Rogerson (2016a)

Type	Description	Examples
Product	Improvements and upgrades on various tourism amenities and services	Tours offering novel experiences (culture-based or nature-based) Restaurants offering food and wine pairing at wineries
Marketing	Shifts in marketing strategies in respond to technological and demand changes	E-marketing strategies (including social media) Strategic partnerships for marketing purposes
Environmental	Development and adoption of environmental-friendly practices to minimise the environmental impact of tourism activities	Energy- and water-saving measures Waste management GHG reduction measures Conservation programmes
Organisational process	Changes of tourism firms' structures to strengthen their presence at the tourist destination or to become more competitive	Strategic alliances to access new markets Training of labour force
Process	Implementation of novel processes to deliver better services to visitors. These innovations are mainly related to information and communication technology	Online platforms for booking and ticketing Integrated management systems
Structural	Inclusive, collaborative, and mutually beneficial innovations beyond tourism firms with positive implications for the local community at a tourism destination	Collaborative marketing strategies for destination branding Promotion of responsible tourism and ecotourism at the destination level Collaborative clusters of nature-based tourism firms
Social	Development of novel tourism products, services, processes, or practices to efficiently deliver social benefits across the destination	Community-outreach programmes (infrastructure, educational, environmental programmes) Visitor centres addressing social issues (discrimination, colonialism, social justice)

Booyens (2022) suggests that social innovations have the potential to lead to structural changes in the tourism sector. It is possible to infer then, that social innovations can lead to structural innovations and, in turn, local innovation systems. This is understandable considering that social innovations in tourism – and other sectors – are collaborative, collective, bottom-up, empowering (especially to marginalised groups), and propose new forms of governance (Booyens, 2022; Moulaert and MacCallum, 2019). Importantly, structural and social innovations are often driven by passionate actors that envision a shift within the destination (Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a). Among these passionate actors, it is possible to identify grassroots organisations (see for instance Flood Chávez and Niewiadomski, 2022; Guia et al., 2022). Guia et al. (2022) call for attention to the role of grassroots organisations in promoting innovation in tourism. Indeed, these organisations are important fertile spaces for the emergence of innovations to tackle sustainability challenges (Guia et al., 2022; Seyfang and Smith, 2007). As such, grassroots innovation in tourism can result in job creation, knowledge creation and transfer, increased sense of community, engagement in governance, and, more importantly, disruption of persistent market-based tourism approaches (Guia et al., 2022). For instance, grassroot organisations in Peru lead innovative tourism initiatives to engage themselves in local governance to tackle structural flaws (corruption) in order to conserve the environment and re-position the locality as a destination (Flood Chávez and Niewiadomski, 2022).

All in all, “the future of tourism in the twenty-first century will depend on how our civilisation deals with the key strategic issues of climate change, development and global governance” (Fayos-Solà and Cooper, 2019a, p. 2). Niewiadomski and Brouder (2022) argue that tourism as a sector is in need of transitioning to more sustainable forms. In that sense, innovation in and governance for sustainable tourism are pivotal for the implementation of sustainable development into the tourism sector. Building on this, Figure 5 depicts sustainable tourism as a path and an objective. As a path, sustainable tourism refers to the mechanisms that incorporate sustainable development principles and guidelines into the tourism sector. As an objective, sustainable tourism encompasses the multiple resulting scenarios of following the sustainable tourism path. The multiplicity of scenarios depends largely on place-specific actors.



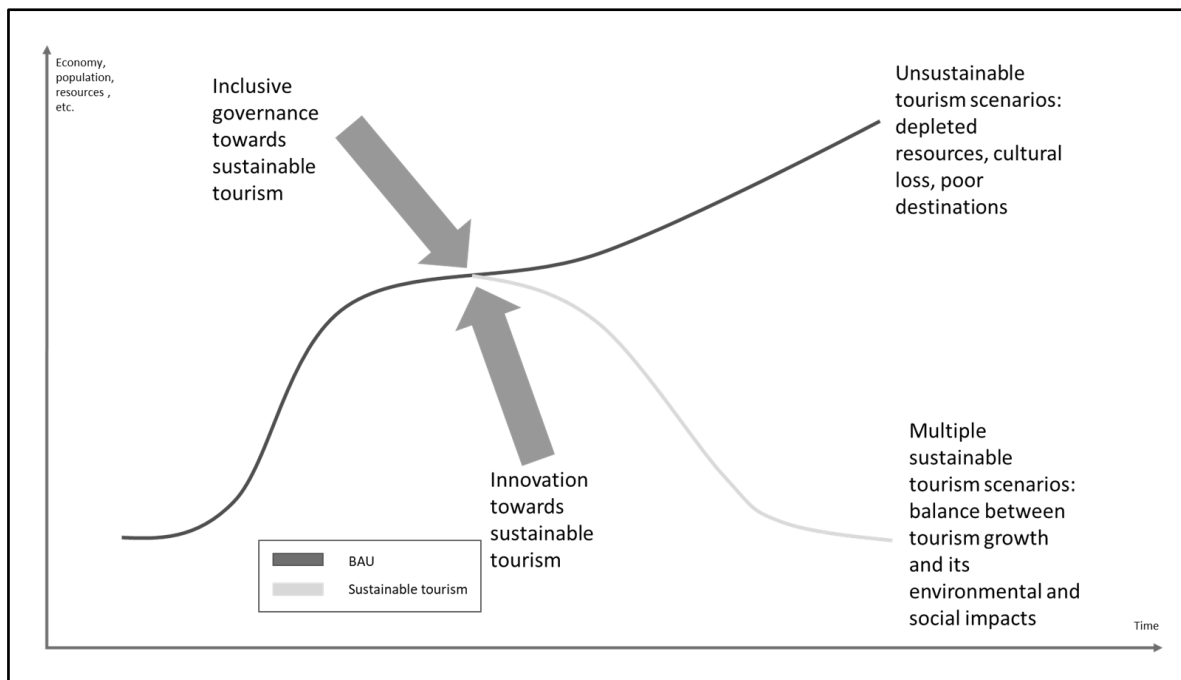


Figure 5: Sustainable tourism as path and objective, adapted from Ruggiero (2021)

Sustainable tourism still needs to overcome a series of systemic and operational challenges. The former refers to overcoming the growth paradigm inherent in the tourism sector (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Reid, 2003). Tourism has been able to reach almost the entire world bringing positive outcomes to hosting communities. Nevertheless, sustainable tourism still faces the challenge to translate those socioeconomic gains into socioenvironmental radical actions (Reid, 2003). Pertinent here is Boluk et al. (2019) proposal to implement a more critical sustainable tourism built on the SDGs. They argue that SDGs can promote critical engagement from tourism studies scholars, inclusion of minorities such as Indigenous people in tourism policymaking, new tourism alternatives far from the growth paradigm, ethical modes of production and consumption in the tourism sector, and sustainable governance frameworks. Among the operational ones, to measure sustainable tourism is one of the most relevant obstacles because often there is not a clear consensus about the meaning of sustainability, global and local indicators do not necessarily complement or correspond to each other, and data is not fully available (Torres-Delgado and Saarinen, 2014). In other cases, sustainable tourism struggles to promote an equal participation of local stakeholders in policymaking processes (Flood Chávez and Niewiadomski, 2022; Lyon and Hunter-Jones, 2019; Torres-Delgado and Saarinen, 2014).

All in all, sustainable tourism with its pros and cons, appears as the best path to secure the survival of the tourism sector and of destinations in the long-term (Liu, 2003). In that regard, it is important to bear in mind that “the fundamental challenge the SDGs and their tourism advocates face if they really want tourism to be a sector of hope is shifting from a growth mentality to one that explicitly commits humanity to prospering and travelling within the limits of the ecosystem of which we are part of” (Hall, 2019, p. 13). To conclude this section, Table 7 summarises the expected effects of investing in sustainable tourism as part of the UN’s guideline to green the tourism sector.

As such, sustainable tourism represents a transition path for destinations - a path where destination can find the balance between their environmental, social, and economic objectives, a path where tourism can take place with minimum impact on the valuable environmental, cultural, and heritage resources it depends on, and, finally, a path where host communities including Indigenous people, visitors, authorities, and tourism corporations and businesses, can participate in the governance of the destination. However, as Chapter 4 will demonstrate, transitions are not an easy task. They are long-term, complex, and contested.

Table 7: Expected effects from investment in sustainable tourism, adapted from UNWTO and UNEP (2012)

Key area	Impact			
	Business opportunities	Job creation	Natural capital	Local development
Energy	Cheaper operating costs for tourism operators	Higher demand for skilled labour force in green energy sectors	Reduced pressure on natural capital	Lower dependency on market fluctuations
Climate change	Potential for conservation schemes and projects	Indirect jobs creation to compensate lost jobs	Increased natural capital as a result of conservation projects	More resilient and stronger local economies
Water	Payment for conservation of water resources	Indirect jobs creation to compensate lost jobs for greening the sector	Increased natural capital related to conservation projects of water catchments	Lower prices of water services in the destinations
Waste	Opportunities for biogas and recycling businesses	Indirect jobs creation to compensate lost jobs for greening the sector	Increased natural capital related to conservation projects	Growth of new local business related to waste management
Biodiversity	Potential for certification and payment for conservation schemes	Indirect jobs creation to compensate lost jobs for greening the sector	Increased natural capital related to conservation projects	Investment on biodiversity-based businesses
Conservation of cultural heritage	Opportunities for authentic goods and cultural services	Indirect jobs creation	Increased natural capital related to conservation of cultural landscapes	Investment on local culture-based businesses
Linkages with local economy	Cascade effect on local businesses due to improved destination reputation	Indirect jobs creation to compensate lost jobs for greening the sector	Increased natural capital due to a neutral environmental impact sector	Creation of local clusters to support the local economy

### 3.7. Summary and conclusions

The first conclusion of this chapter is that tourism has a complex nature and, while efforts have been done to conceptualise it, tourism remains a challenging object of study. Among those efforts, a geographical perspective on tourism has largely developed the analysis of tourism, emphasising the role of space and time in the tourism experience. In that regard, a geographical perspective on tourism allows this research to understand tourism as an industry that encompasses other regional industries. It also helps to understand how various place-specific resources can result on different types of tourism such as the ones that take place in the Margaret River region. Additionally, this chapter has presented aspects such as pull factors, destination image, and destination branding which are pivotal factors in the transition of the MRR towards sustainable tourism.

A second conclusion of this chapter is that the impacts of tourism at the destination level are influenced by local and global factors that interact with each other. This puts in evidence the broad and complex nature of tourism and, in turn, evidences the complexity of achieving sustainable tourism. To address any of the impacts of tourism in a destination such as the Margaret River region would entail trade-offs. Hence, addressing the impacts of tourism at the destination level requires the participation of various stakeholders including members of the host community, authorities, businesses, corporations, and visitors. Importantly, tourism not only has to pay attention to its impacts but also to strategies to face global challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. Both, the impacts and challenges, urge tourism to undergo ambitious and radical changes to achieve a balance between growing and preserving the resources it depends on.

This section presented sustainable tourism as a potential solution to the *balance quest* of tourism. Indeed, as it happens with sustainable development, sustainable tourism aims to bring a balance between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions related to the tourism sector. The tourism sector is on the quest of finding ways to balance tourism economic growth and its environmental and social impacts. While some arguments call to prioritise the environmental and social factors, it is important to acknowledge that tourism acts as a development driver for many communities that have found in tourism an important source of economic

income. As such, sustainable tourism represents a conscious shift in tourism by means of incorporating sustainable development and green economy mechanism into the tourism sector. Certainly, this process is not simple and requires the participation of multiple actors at multiple scales that often interact following an individual agenda or vested interests. However, innovation in several destinations towards sustainable tourism and sustainable development is already happening (as also mentioned by the UNWTO Secretary-General at the beginning of this chapter). An important element in these innovations is the role of government and grassroots organisations as they can influence a path towards sustainable tourism as noted in Figure 5.

Therefore, a third conclusion of this chapter is that sustainable tourism is a process and an objective. As such, sustainable tourism provides guidance to incorporate sustainable development strategies and measures into the tourism sector. At the same time, sustainable tourism is an objective that unifies efforts from different tourism stakeholders to achieve a balance between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of tourism. In turn, this chapter suggests that sustainable tourism does not provide a single future scenario but multiple instead. Those scenarios largely depend on place-specific factors such as natural resources, local culture, entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer, and governance. To better understand the process towards sustainable tourism, scholars have developed various approaches. One of those approaches is sustainability transitions which is addressed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4.

### Framing sustainability transitions in tourism: MLP and EEG

*“To be radical is to grasp things by the root”*

*(Karl Marx, 1844)*

#### 4.1. Introduction

The previous chapters have addressed the *sustainability* and *tourism* components of this thesis. Now, this chapter moves the attention to the theoretical frameworks that address the *transition* component. In the simplest terms, transitions refer to a change from a previous condition to a different one that is not necessarily better or worse. Throughout history, it is possible to identify massive and complex transitions. For instance, the change from hunter-gatherer societies to urban societies; or from rural to industrial societies (Geels et al., 2004). This chapter focuses on a particular type of transition: sustainability transitions. Sustainability transitions refer to changes or shifts that are required to overcome the current sustainability challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption (Turnheim et al., 2015). These shifts are expected to bring humanity to more sustainable scenarios. While sustainable development and sustainable tourism provide important guidelines and strategies to achieve sustainable scenarios and destinations, sustainability transitions provide a fine-grained and more encompassing theoretical – and sometimes practical – analysis.

To that objective, research on sustainability transitions builds on the concept of sociotechnical systems. These systems are networks of actors, technologies, infrastructure, policies, routines, and other elements necessary to deliver societal functions such as transportation, alimentation, energy production and consumption, water distribution, and heating (Geels, 2004). Sustainability transitions research aims to identify, manage, and promote the actions (innovations) required to shift sociotechnical systems from unsustainable practices and rules to more sustainable ones (Köhler et al., 2019). As such, sustainability transitions research uses different theoretical frameworks. Among those, the multi-level perspective (MLP) – a framework that understands transitions as the interaction between three analytical levels (Geels, 2006) – has gained a preponderant position (Niewiadomski and

Brouder, 2022). The MLP emphasises the role of history in transitions which allows an evolutionary approach to transitions. An emerging but promising theoretical paradigm to address evolutionary processes is evolutionary economic geography (EEG). This paradigm uses concepts and theories from other disciplines to explore the evolution of regional economic landscapes (Boschma and Martin, 2010). Path-dependence (and related concepts) is one of those theories that has proved useful to address the evolution of tourist destinations (Brouder, 2014a). Hence, this chapter addresses the pivotal theoretical frameworks of this thesis, the MLP and EEG (particularly path-dependence theory).

This chapter consists of five sections and a conclusion. Section 4.2 addresses sociotechnical transitions. The following section (section 4.3) discusses relevant sustainability transitions research concepts such as societal challenges, geography of sustainability transitions, and the main frameworks used to address these transitions. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 presents and critically discusses the MLP and EEG which are the theoretical frameworks of this thesis. The last section (section 4.6) closes the literature review part of this thesis and prepares the ground for the methodology chapter.

## **4.2. Sociotechnical transitions**

Geels (2006, 2002b, 2002a) indicates that sociotechnical transitions are changes in sociotechnical systems from a given configuration to another due to the influence of innovations. Sociotechnical systems are stable networks of actors, cultural meanings, infrastructure, artefacts, regulation, and institutions that meet a societal function (for instance, transportation, communication, water treatment) (Geels, 2004; Marletto et al., 2016). The stability of sociotechnical systems is the result of favourable institutional arrangements, supportive regulation frameworks, adapted lifestyle, embedded routines, and tailored infrastructure, that operate at the production, distribution, and consumption domains (Geels, 2004; Geels et al., 2004; Köhler et al., 2019). Geels (2002a) argue that coordination and alignment of social actors play a very important role as it influences the production and reproduction of sociotechnical systems rules. These rules include policies or guidelines, routines, practices, and search heuristics (cognitive forms to solve everyday problems). While sociotechnical systems tend to be stable, they are susceptible to shifts or innovations

in one or more of their components. These shifts can have a radical or incremental nature. According to Geels and Schott (2007), radical or a mixture of radical and incremental innovations can lead to sociotechnical transitions (see also Freeman and Perez, 1988; Geels et al., 2004; Markard et al., 2012a; Marletto et al., 2016). As such, sociotechnical transitions are far-reaching, complex, and long-term processes that involve the emergence, replacement, and disappearing of products, services, and business models (Geels, 2006; Markard et al., 2012a; Rotmans et al., 2001a).

While sociotechnical systems vary according to the societal function they meet, they all rely on multiple interactions between technology and social actors (Geels et al., 2004). In fact, sociotechnical systems imply a co-evolution between technology and society as both adapt to the progress and needs of each other (Geels, 2004; Leonard-Barton, 1988). As such, sociotechnical systems involve human agency, functioning networks, knowledge development and transfer, technological innovation, resource mobilisation, strong social platforms, innovative product design, creation of markets, and effective policy frameworks (Geels, 2002a; Grin et al., 2011a).

Importantly, while sociotechnical systems involve the participation of various actors, such as firms, public authorities, non-governmental organisations, and research bodies, they do not have the same role or influence (Marletto et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2005). Their influence varies according to the sociotechnical system they operate as many actors operate in more than one sociotechnical system. For instance, universities can produce useful knowledge for the transportation and communication sociotechnical systems simultaneously. Smith et al. (2005) indicates that sociotechnical systems encompass core and marginal actors depending on their degree of influence on a particular sociotechnical system. Core agents are the most influential type of actors in the stability of a sociotechnical system (Marletto et al., 2016). Yet, core and marginal actors must interact to maintain the adequate operation of sociotechnical systems (see Figure 6). For instance, Figure 7 displays the sociotechnical system that operates to deliver personal transportation.



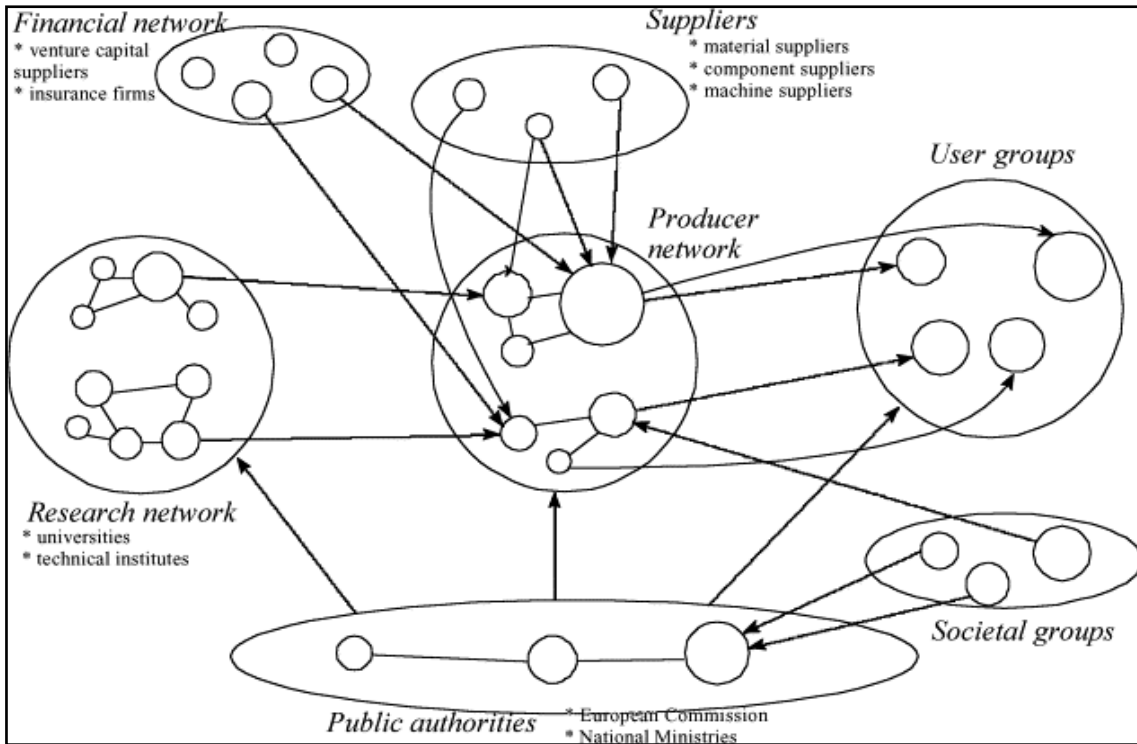


Figure 6: The multiple interactions of actors in a sociotechnical system, Geels et al. (2004, p. 34, figure 2.2)

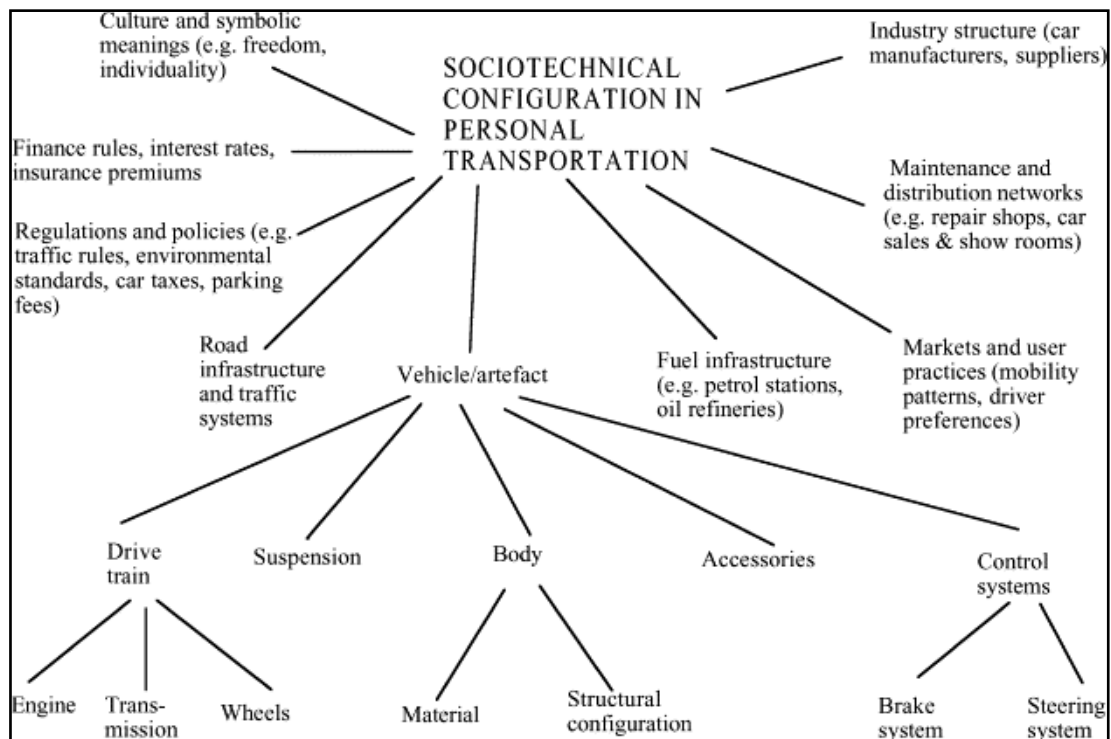


Figure 7: Example of sociotechnical system for the delivery of a societal function, Geels (2002a, p. 1258, figure 1)

Understanding sociotechnical systems is important because it provides the basis for the next section, but most importantly because it can be used to understand tourism as a sociotechnical system that meets the societal function of travel (for different tourism motivations). For instance, Hall (2016, p. 351) indicates that tourism as a sociotechnical system operates as “seamless web” of multiple elements (for example, airports, standards, regulations, labour markets, destination management organisations, natural resources, economic and social capital, cultural meaning, knowledge, and technology) that together fulfil a particular societal function such as leisure travel.

### **4.3. Sustainability transitions**

In simple terms, sustainability transitions implies the transition of an unsustainable – or partially sustainable – sociotechnical system into a sustainable – or more sustainable – sociotechnical system. Sustainability transitions are complex processes that entail deep transformations of sociotechnical systems (Geels et al., 2004; Köhler et al., 2019; Turnheim et al., 2015). Therefore, sustainability transitions entail the transformation of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption (Markard et al., 2012a). Köhler et al. (2019) list the main features of sustainability transitions that differentiate it from general sociotechnical transitions (see Table 8). Sustainability transitions require shifting the dominant unsustainable configurations of sociotechnical systems. As in general sociotechnical systems, system innovations (often radical), whether they are technological, organisational, or institutional (see Hekkert et al., 2007; van den Bergh et al., 2011), are pivotal triggers of sustainability transitions (Marletto et al., 2016). Hence, sustainability transitions imply institutional, governance, social, political, and technological changes (Brown et al., 2004; Geels, 2011). An example of sustainability transitions are low-carbon transitions taking place in several countries in the Global North with the participation of public and private actors (Rosenbloom, 2017).

Table 8: Characteristics of sustainability transitions, Köhler et al. (2019, pp. 2–3)

Characteristic	Description
Multi-dimensionality and co-evolution	Transitions are not linear processes. They are composed by multiple and interdependent processes of all their elements.
Multi-actor process	Transitions involve a large variety of actors and social groups coming from different sectors. Each has their own resources, capabilities, values, and interests. They also have many kinds of agency which turn transitions into complex processes.
Stability and change	Transitions include a complex and multi-dimensional relationship between forces pushing for radical changes and others pushing for stability.
Long-term process	Transitions are long-term processes that could take decades to unfold. This is due to the time innovations take to develop from early stages to widespread diffusion, or the influence of incumbent actors.
Open-endedness and uncertainty	Transitions bring multiple pathways setting an open-ended future scenario. Besides, all possible scenarios are subject to uncertainty due to political and social-cultural issues.
Values, contestation, and disagreement	Transitions to sustainability hold the contested values that sustainability carries regarding its applicability and strength. Hence, whether it is related to a weak or strong approach of sustainability it might threaten economic positions and business models of some of the largest and most powerful industries. This scenario could foster the emergence of incumbent actors.
Normative directionality	Transitions require a strong public participation in the policy-making process to steer them through environmental regulations, standards, taxes, subsidies, and innovation policies.

Sustainability transitions are inherently political processes that involve notions of policymaking, power relations, and governance (Köhler et al., 2019). For instance, public policies influence resource availability, investor confidence, and investment in innovation, all of which are pivotal for sustainability transitions (Edmondson et al., 2018; Voß et al., 2009). As a result, sustainability transitions require long-term, flexible, and adaptative public policies (Voß et al., 2009), especially because sustainability transitions do not unfold at same speed as political processes such as electoral cycles or standard governments programmes. While the former take several decades to unfold, the latter are much shorter (Truffer and Coenen, 2012). Indeed, public policies can influence the speed, direction, and scope of sustainability transitions (Edmondson et al., 2018). However, this does not entirely explain that even in countries whose governments have embraced sustainability transitions those

transitions have not unfolded at the speed or the direction expected (Hess, 2014). Here is where power dynamics between actors and networks of actors take relevance. Sustainability transitions entail power struggles between actors (core and marginals) with different interests that, in some cases, might be contested (Avelino and Rotmans, 2009).

Transitions to more sustainable scenarios are not necessary of interest to all actors involved. Hence, actors that perceive a benefit by a stable and persistent sociotechnical system – even if it is unsustainable or partially sustainable – might attempt to use their power to oppose any radical change of the status quo (Köhler et al., 2019). These opposing actors, often members of powerful industries that refuse to change, are referred to as *incumbent actors*. However, Geels (2011) argues that in cases where incumbent actors support sustainability transitions (probably due to profit-driven reasons), the former accelerates the latter. It is possible that in tourist destinations, incumbent actors might identify sustainability transitions as necessary for the destination (for instance, to increase levels of visitation or to enhance local natural or cultural resources) and consequently could help to accelerate the process.

Among these power struggles, governance appears as an important process through which actors, incumbent or not, can negotiate, bargain, and orchestrate collective decisions that could – in the best scenario – result in support towards sustainability transitions (Smith et al., 2005). Indeed, governance of sustainability transitions involves the participation and engagement of various actors not only in the political and corporate spheres of society, but also members of social movements and grassroots organisations (Chilvers and Longhurst, 2016; Seyfang and Smith, 2007). As Köhler et al. (2019) argue, sustainability transitions involve top-down but also bottom-up approaches involving a large range of actors. However, it is important to consider that all those actors and their interactions are embedded in wider social, economic, and financial systems (Smith et al., 2005). As a result, green innovation might be of incremental rather than radical nature. Grin et al. (2011a) suggest that sustainability transitions cannot result from mere incremental innovation such as existing technological amendments or behavioural changes (Köhler et al., 2019; van den Bergh et al., 2011). On the contrary, sustainability transitions often require the

emergence and development of radical innovations (Geels et al., 2004; Grin et al., 2011b; Markard et al., 2012a; Marletto et al., 2016).

Depending on their scope, speed, and direction, sustainability transitions can follow different trajectories (Geels and Schot, 2007). Recent literature often refers to trajectories as pathways (see for instance Foxon et al., 2010; Grin et al., 2011a; Kenis et al., 2016; Turnheim et al., 2015; UNEP, 2011a). Rosenbloom (2017) defines pathways as the unfolding patterns that a sociotechnical system manifest while transitioning. In the context of sustainability transitions, pathways involve the progressive reconfiguration of sociotechnical systems towards more sustainable scenarios as a result of continuing negotiations between their actors (Foxon et al., 2010; Rosenbloom, 2018; Turnheim et al., 2015). For instance, an analysis of eighteen low-carbon transition pathways identified common characteristics including radical reduction in energy consumption, improvement of energy efficiency, fast replacement of fossil-fuels, intense sequestration of carbon, radical green innovation, effective financial measures, and prioritisation of environmental and social dimensions over the economic one (Wiseman et al., 2013). Similarly, in the case of tourism, Brouder (2020) identifies four possible pathways due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only of those pathways represents a sustainability transition as a result of simultaneous innovation towards sustainability at the destination level and an enhanced visitors' sustainability awareness. This is important for this thesis as it already evidences the importance of innovation in sustainability transitions in tourism.

Considering that sustainability transitions propose a transformation towards more sustainable scenarios, it is possible to argue that they are related to sustainability, sustainable development, and green economy (Broman and Robèrt, 2017; Grin et al., 2011a; Jordan, 2008; Schmandt et al., 2000). As such, sustainability transitions should entail stronger government participation, corporate social responsibility, public involvement, and more democratisation (Geels, 2004). In that sense, sustainability transitions could represent a process of sustainable development implementation into sociotechnical systems that are not entirely sustainable or that are unsustainable (Smith et al., 2010). In other words, sustainable development implies a need for sustainability transitions (Grin et al., 2011a; Meadowcroft, 2009).

Indeed, sustainable development often serve as the normative directionality for sustainability transitions (Geels, 2011). In the case of this thesis, sustainable tourism takes the role of sustainable development as the normative directionality. However, the contested nature of sustainable development and sustainable tourism as well as the usual criticism they all receive (see Chapters 2 and 3) are a challenge to the sustainability transitions they guide (Jordan, 2008; Smith et al., 2010).

Jordan (2008) argues that the ambiguity and complexity of sustainable development and related concepts can hinder the emergence of radical innovation. This is because actors within sociotechnical systems do not necessarily share the same interpretations of sustainable development (Geels, 2004; Smith et al., 2010a). Hence, trade-offs between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development might follow different interests. In fact, actors in – unsustainable or partially sustainable – sociotechnical system tend to rank environmental problems in different manners as well as the policy frameworks to solve them (Geels, 2004). This takes us back to the discussion about governance in sustainability transitions where issues of economic and political power tend to promote or hinder sustainability transitions (Smith et al., 2010). As a result, there are various sustainability transition pathways that apply sustainable development and green economy in different ways (Geels, 2004).

Despite their ambitious scope, sustainability transitions are immensely challenging and are not straightforward. Sustainability transitions must deal with multiple scales, geographies, and temporalities; uncertainties associated with radical innovation; complex powers dynamics; and contested perspectives on normative guidelines (for instance sustainable development) (Turnheim et al., 2015). By the same token, Meadowcroft (2009) claims that sustainability transitions must find ways to disrupt unsustainable or partially sustainable sociotechnical systems to allow the emergence, development, and dominance of green innovation. Disruption of stable systems is not an easy task though, especially due to influence and power of incumbent industries that would attempt to hinder, delay or water down any attempts to unfold sustainability transitions (Geels, 2004). In that regard, Alkemade et al. (2011) recommends that policies that seek to promote sustainability transitions must emphasise radical green innovations rather than merely incremental ones. For

instance, radical policies could include mechanisms to phase-out unsustainable sociotechnical systems (Kern and Smith, 2008). Phase-out refers to a gradual elimination or dismantling of a given system or its key infrastructure. Another hurdle to sustainability transitions is the emphasis on technological innovation (Alkemade et al., 2009; Grin et al., 2011b) as it could cause a loss of vital input from other sources of innovation (Grin et al., 2011a). To acknowledge this hurdle is important for this thesis because, as it was discussed in Chapter 3, innovation in tourism can take many forms including organisational, social, and institutional. Besides, an overreliance on technological innovation could also increase the demand of material resources contributing to unsustainable consumption or increasing pressure on natural resources (Smith et al., 2010).

In sum, shifts towards more sustainable scenarios require sustainability transitions that offer feasible and desirable pathways to cope with the current societal challenges (Geels, 2004). Sustainable development and sustainable tourism (in the case of the tourism sector) appear as adequate normative guidelines for sustainability transitions. However, governance of sustainability transitions must consider the different power dynamics that sustainable development and related frameworks involve given their contested and often criticised nature. Yet, sustainability transitions based mainly on radical innovation appear as a promising, although complex, way to achieve the necessary societal transformations towards a more sustainable future.

#### 4.3.1. Societal challenges

In the last decades several institutions in the Global North have focused on sustainability transitions such as The Stockholm Environmental Institute, the American National Research Council, the Dutch Research Council, and the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (Geels et al., 2004). According to Köhler et al. (2019), the underlying motivation to focus on sustainability transitions is that global environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion, constitute important societal challenges. As such, sustainability transitions are becoming more relevant in debates about environmental issues in relation to the current industrial development (Smith et al., 2010). Grimm et al. (2013) expand the environmental issues and place

the focus on socioeconomic challenges such as uneven economic development and demographic transitions that also represent societal challenges. More recently, McGahan et al. (2021) consider that health issues, mobility barriers, and the COVID-19 pandemic are societal challenges as well. In that sense, the question is *what are societal challenges?*

Societal challenges are persistent problems that often manifest as multiple crises including food, water, health, energy, and climate (Grimm et al., 2013; Grin et al., 2011a). Societal challenges are persistent because they involve several actors at different scales and domains under complex and dynamic interrelations (Grin et al., 2011a; Wittmayer et al., 2014). As such, societal challenges are persistent because they are “problems deeply embedded in society” (Wittmayer et al., 2014, p. 467). Schmandt et al. (2000) argue that societal challenges have an unpredictable nature and tend to threaten the survival of an existing sociotechnical system. In fact, modern industrialised societies are dealing with several complex persistent problems that require long-term strategic solutions (Loorbach, 2010). Importantly, while societal challenges tend to be understood as global problems, Wittmayer et al. (2014) claim that they have a geographical dimension. This means that societal challenges might vary or be perceived different through space. As such, this adds another level of complexity to societal challenges.

Considering that many of the current societal challenges have been triggered or worsened by unsustainable consumption and production patterns (Köhler et al., 2019), solutions should have a radical nature away from neoliberal and market-based incremental solutions (Grimm et al., 2013; Grin et al., 2011a). Yet, inaction is even a worse response to societal challenges (Schmandt et al., 2000). In that sense, sustainability transitions appear as long-term strategy to tackle – or at least contribute to the mitigation of – these societal challenges (Wittmayer et al., 2014). Research on sustainability transitions mainly addresses societal challenges at two levels of analysis (Grin et al., 2011a). The first focuses on the influence that markets, governments, and society relationships have on the emergence, development, and implementation of green innovation. As indicated in the previous section, green innovation and inclusive governance play an important role in sustainability transitions. The second level is concerned with the virtues, values, and norms that



influence and are influenced by normative guidelines such as sustainable development. All in all, sustainability transitions are a relevant theoretical paradigm for understanding transitions in tourism as they address the radical and systemic changes required to overcome societal challenges and achieve new sustainable sociotechnical systems (Köhler et al., 2019).

#### 4.3.2. Geography of sustainability transitions

Sustainability transitions as a research field emerged and proliferated in countries with an environment-friendly constituency and high economic growth (often in the Global North) during the 1990s and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Truffer et al., 2015). Research on sustainability transitions mainly focused on the national scale without enquiring into the influence of national boundaries on the transition processes (Markard et al., 2012a). In fact, during those decades the focus of those studies implied that the national scale was the most adequate level to address sustainability transitions (Raven et al., 2012). However, in the last decade developing countries have taken the lead in green innovations. This new development involved the participation of actors above the national scale such as multinational corporations, multi-lateral financial bodies, and international non-governmental organisations (Truffer et al., 2015). As a result, geographical aspects became relevant to understand the factors that determine geographically uneven sustainability transitions, including global forces, transnational relationships, subnational transition processes, and the role of actors at different scales (Hansen and Coenen, 2015; Markard et al., 2012a; Truffer et al., 2015). Also, considering that Chapter 3 describes tourism as a driver of uneven landscapes and a highly place-based industry, a geographical perspective on sustainability transitions becomes relevant for this thesis.

Geographies of sustainability transitions (see Hansen and Coenen, 2015; Köhler et al., 2019; Truffer et al., 2015) is now a subfield of research within the wider sustainability transitions research field. This subfield incorporates geographical concepts such as place, space, and scale, and, in turn, questions how those elements can influence the stability and disruption of an unsustainable or partially sustainable sociotechnical system (Hansen and Coenen, 2015). In other words, a geographical perspective on sustainability transitions aims to explain the reasons

behind uneven sustainability transitions across locations by paying attention to the role of place-dependent factors that condition transitions in a given space (Bridge et al., 2013; Hansen and Coenen, 2015; Köhler et al., 2019; Murphy and Smith, 2013). Köhler et al. (2019) indicate that geographies of sustainability transitions mainly follows two strands of research. The first strand refers to the influence of place-specific factors, such as institutional settings, local cultures, social networks, and infrastructures, on sustainability transitions. For instance, Bridge et al. (2013) suggest that place-based patterns such as emotional attachments to a particular landscape (Tuan, 1990 describes this as *topophilia*) or local natural resource scarcity can enable or hinder energy sustainability transitions. The second strand pays attention to the influence of interactions across place and scale on sustainability transitions. For instance, national policies to create a market for green transport in the Netherlands, that does not have an established car industry, benefited foreign industries interested in that market (Alkemade et al., 2011).

Considering that geography of sustainability transitions uses space, place, and scale to address transitions (Binz et al., 2014; Coenen et al., 2012; Murphy, 2015; Raven et al., 2012), it is necessary to provide a brief explanation of each of them and, more importantly, their relation to sustainability transitions. Since these three concepts are various and, in some cases contested (Agnew, 2011) (for instance, place and space can be defined differently from a neo-Marxist, agency-based, feminist, or performative approach perspective), this subsection refers to the definitions that have proved to be useful for the understanding of sustainability transitions (see for instance Binz et al., 2014; Coenen et al., 2012; Hansen and Coenen, 2015; Raven et al., 2012).

Space, according to Massey (2005), is relational and, consequently, highly political. This means that interactions between diverse global and local elements with contested, complementary, or common political views are constantly constructing space or spaces. Actors, influenced by their proximity, can build strong links that create spaces with particular institutional, governance, and power arrangements (Boschma, 2005; Coenen et al., 2012; Raven et al., 2012). Space is not physical territoriality but also a construct (Raven et al., (2012, p. 68). Hence, by means of incorporating *space* into research on sustainability transitions it is possible to identify

*power asymmetries* in sociotechnical systems (Raven et al., 2012; Truffer et al., 2015). For instance, spatial organisation of production is defined by complex and temporary commitments between firms, institutions, and authorities within specific power dynamics (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003).

“Place is always different” (Massey, 2005, p. 162). Considering that space is built by constant and diverse interactions, *place* adds the uniqueness to those interactions that shapes different processes, including sustainability transitions (Coenen et al., 2012; Massey, 2005). As such, place serves as a critical context for the emergence and development of practices, norms, conventions, and rules that shape regions (Murphy, 2015). Staeheli (2003) argues that place does not only refer to power relationships in society but also to material elements that reflect political strategies and objectives. In that sense, it is possible to argue that place has a direct influence on the uneven unfolding of sustainability transitions (Bridge et al., 2013; Hansen and Coenen, 2015; Murphy, 2015). For instance, place can influence the emergence of green innovation in particular regions. While every region has the potential to innovate, the emergence and effectiveness of their innovation depend on regional industrial and technological specialisation (skilled labour force, technological development, existing infrastructure, investment in research), and supportive policies (Hansen and Coenen, 2015). By the same token, Bridge et al. (2013) suggest that local informal actors can influence green energy transitions due to their emotional attachments to a particular landscape or their perception of the scarcity of local resources. Table 9 presents a summary of common place-specific factors that influence sustainability transitions.

Scale, according to Howitt (2003), is a set of relations constructed by different groups – with different power – that, in turn, reflects and determines the spatial form of those relations (Howitt, 2003; Marston, 2000). As such, the dual nature of scale allows research in sustainability transitions to identify the role of actors establishing scales and interacting within them (Raven et al., 2012). For instance, Asheim et al. (2011) indicate that regional actors are better prepared to design and operationalise regional policies towards sustainability transitions than actors at the national scale. This is because regional actors have a better understanding of place-specific factors than national actors.

Table 9: Description of relevant place-specific factors in sustainability transitions, based on Hansen and Coenen (2015) and Köhler et al. (2019)

Place-specific factors	Description
Visions and policies	Urban and regional policies are central to promote the embedding and diffusion of innovations. Their visions encompass various areas resulting in contested and negotiated policies. Such policies aim to combine ecological goals with economic competitiveness, as well as to promote industrial development of cleantech industries.
Informal localised institutions	They condition the diffusion and development of environmental innovation. They could also influence the regulatory push on the adoption of environmental regulation. However, they might vary within local or urban territories resulting on contested views on sustainability.
Natural resource endowments	The scarcity of resources results in stimuli towards investment in renewable energy development and its diffusion. Resource endowment influences the choices regarding renewable energy.
Technology and industrial specialisation	The specialisation of the industry conditions the development of innovations necessary for sustainability transitions. Such local specialisation is the starting point for selective regional policy agendas that could reinforce industrial specialisation.
Consumers and market formation	Local consumers are central to local market creation. Likewise, the geographical proximity between producers and end-users allows the first to obtain feedback from the second which is useful for innovation.

Therefore, a geographical approach in terms of space, place, and scale allows analysis of socio-spatial embedding, diversity of scales, and issues of power in sustainability transitions (Truffer et al., 2015). Socio-spatial embedding refers to the influence that place-specific factors have on the emergence, unfolding, and success of sustainability transitions in a given region. In turn, by understanding scales as socially constructed it is possible to identify a diversity of scales beyond deterministic hierarchies (global, national, local), and focus on the interrelation between places in multiple scales. Finally, issues of power refer to uneven power relations that take place in the creation of spaces and establishment of scales that have a direct impact on sustainability transitions.

### 4.3.3. Frameworks for analysing sustainable transitions

Research on sustainability transitions tends to adopt four theoretical frameworks that offer different lenses through which sustainability transitions can be analysed. Those frameworks are: technological innovation systems (TIS), transition management (TM), strategic niche management (SNM), and the multi-level perspective (MLP) (Köhler et al., 2019; Markard et al., 2012a; van den Bergh et al., 2011). These theoretical lenses share a range of features and key elements. For instance, Figure 8 maps the interrelations between them and the key concepts and research strands they have in common. By the same token, the four frameworks take a systemic approach to address co-evolutionary processes, aim to explain similar phenomena (evolution and transitions), focus on sociotechnical systems, and pay attention to the role of innovation (or green innovation with regards to sustainability transitions) (Köhler et al., 2019; Markard and Truffer, 2008; van den Bergh et al., 2011).

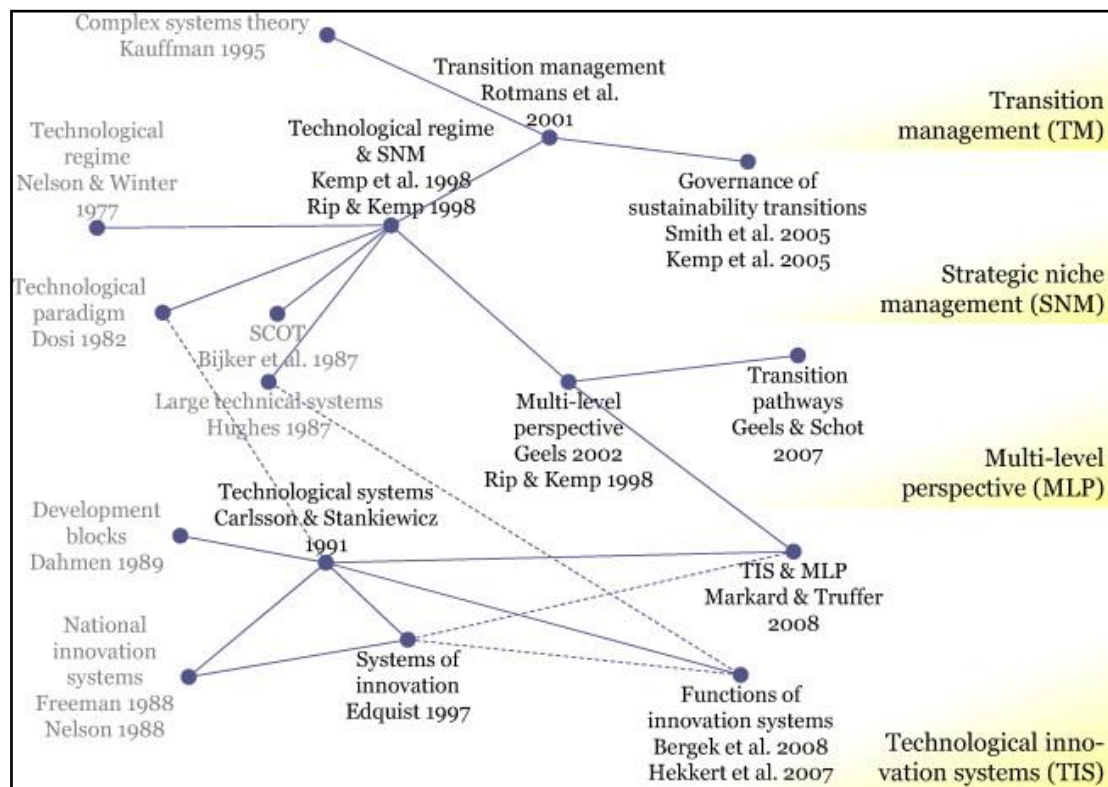


Figure 8: Key contributions and core research strands in sustainability transitions, Markard et al. (2012b, p. 957, figure 1)

At this point, it is pertinent to provide a brief description of the TIS, TM, SNM, and MLP. The TIS is concerned with processes behind the emergence and development of organisations, networks, or institutions that are involved in innovation processes (Weber and Rohracher, 2012). Hence, according to TIS, sustainability transitions are the consequence of market penetration by new green technologies and products pushing out established technologies (Coenen et al., 2012). Bergek et al. (2008) mention seven functions that need to be completed for novelty to emerge: knowledge development and diffusion, entrepreneurial experimentation, influence on the direction of search, market formation, legitimation, resource mobilisation, development of positive externalities). While TIS allows policymakers to identify hurdles in the emergence on novelty by means of paying attention to those seven functions (Hekkert et al., 2007; Jacobsson and Bergek, 2011), TIS fails to address the stability of sociotechnical systems once novelty has developed and do a breakthrough (Köhler et al., 2019).

In turn, TM aims to achieve sustainable development by means of using short-term experiments to assess optimal pathways (Frantzeskaki et al., 2011; Voß et al., 2009). In these experiments, governments have an important role as they have to balance long-term sustainability objectives with short-term social concerns (Rotmans et al., 2001b). Governments involved in TM create spaces for short-term innovation and long-term visions to foster sustainability transitions (Loorbach, 2010). TM focuses on nurturing and growing, rather than planning and controlling, sustainability transitions (Voß et al., 2009). Yet, this framework is very often challenged by deeply rooted societal structural challenges such as corruption and inequality as well as by incumbent actors operating in persistent sociotechnical systems (Geels, 2004; Köhler et al., 2019).

SNM suggests that radical innovations emerge in *protected spaces* or niches that give them the adequate environment to develop without being affected by market selection (Hoogma et al., 2002; Köhler et al., 2019). These protected spaces are discrete habitats where actors can work under specific functionalities carrying out interactive learning processes and institutional adaptations to achieve the diffusion and development of novelty (Hoogma et al., 2002; Kemp et al., 1998). By contrast to TIS, SNM is not mainly a policy tool, but a framework to set adequate configurations

for a successful niche development (Schot and Geels, 2008). In that sense, the aim of SNM is to create, nurture, and protect promising niches for the emergence of novelty through experimentation (Hoogma et al., 2002). It is precisely because of its bottom-up nature that SNM is subject of criticism. The MLP, that partially shares theoretical grounds with SNM, corrects such bottom-up approach (Schot and Geels, 2008).

Finally, the MLP, which is one of the most prominent frameworks used in sustainability transition research, consists of three analytical levels with different degrees of structure and temporalities (Geels, 2011, 2002a). Those analytical levels are niche innovations (niches), sociotechnical regimes (regimes), and sociotechnical landscapes (landscapes). They present clear differences, but sustainability transitions can unfold as a result of their interaction, (Geels and Schot, 2007; Turnheim et al., 2015). In simple terms, green innovation takes place in niches where it develops until they can make a breakthrough into the regime, thus leading to a shift in the sociotechnical system (Geels, 2004; 2011). Importantly, the MLP has a strong evolutionary focus. This means that it pays attention to the role of history in the formation of persistent sociotechnical systems and the emergence of novelty (Geels, 2018, 2011; Geels and Schot, 2007; Köhler et al., 2019). As such, the MLP provides a stronger theoretical and practical framework compared to TIS, TM, and SNM, and, consequently, appears as a more useful approach to address the evolution of tourist destinations and the sustainability transitions that can unfold (see for instance Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). For instance, in the case of this thesis, the MLP allows the research to identify the multiple interactions between tourism stakeholders at the destination along history. The MLP is further explored and critically discussed in the next section.

Having provided the general concepts surrounding sustainability transitions, it is possible to delve into the key frameworks that underpin this thesis. The first framework, that has been briefly addressed in this section, is the MLP. Evidently, the next section will provide a wider critical discussion of the MLP. In turn, as noted also in this section, the MLP has a strong evolutionary perspective. One of the most compelling theoretical frameworks that focuses on evolution from a geographical perspective is EEG. EEG is addressed in the subsequent section.

#### 4.4. The multi-level perspective

The MLP combines ideas from evolutionary economics, the sociology of innovation, and the institutional theory (Köhler et al., 2019). It is concerned with the breakthrough of innovative niches, the conditions that permit the disruption of persistent sociotechnical systems, and the resulting sociotechnical systems (Jørgensen, 2012; Lawhon and Murphy, 2012). As such, the MLP is not only used to address sustainability transitions but also various cases of historical transitions such as the change from carriage-based to fuel-based passenger transport (Geels, 2005a; Jørgensen, 2012). To frame the complex dynamics that transitions entail, the MLP proposes three analytical levels: niche, regime and landscape (Köhler et al., 2019). Those three levels resemble the classic distinction between micro, meso, and macrolevels used to describe technological transitions (see Rip and Kemp, 1998). Niches correspond to the microlevel, regimes to the mesolevel, and landscapes to the macrolevel (Geels, 2004; Rip and Kemp, 1998). Since the three levels are addressed in the next subsection, at this point it suffices to mention that niches are protected spaces for the development of green innovation, regimes are the core structure of sociotechnical systems, and landscape refers to developments outside the influence of regime and niches (Geels, 2004; Geels and Schot, 2007; Jørgensen, 2012; Köhler et al., 2019). Among the three levels, the regime is the focus of sustainability transitions research (Köhler et al., 2019)

The MLP explores transitions from a dominant regime to another that often happens in periods of pressing societal challenges, institutional struggles, and technological transformations (Jørgensen, 2012). According to the MLP, transitions entail destabilisation of regimes, breakthrough of innovation, and overthrow of an incumbent regime. As such, transitions are often a result of top-down landscape pressures and the bottom-up developments of emerging niches (Kivimaa and Kern, 2016). In a few cases, regimes can influence wider landscape development such as the breakthrough of communication regimes into the socioeconomic globalisation (Smith et al., 2010). Figure 9 depicts the interaction of the MLP analytical levels. The vertical axis indicates an increasing structuration whereas the horizontal axis refers to time. Structuration refers to the degree of associations, networks, policies, institutions, and supportive actors in which a level operates (Fuenfschilling and



Truffer, 2014). Due to their level of structuration, each analytical level reflects a strong reaction towards change. For instance, landscapes tend to change at very slow rate and are hardly disturbed. Nonetheless, global events such as crises can result in abrupt changes at the landscape level influencing regimes and niches (Geels and Schot, 2007; Köhler et al., 2019). Another important element to notice, is that regimes are a structure of multiple elements such as market users, industries, science, and culture. It is often the case that all those elements are arranged in a stable and effective manner. However, those elements can be disrupted giving opportunity for novelty to enter into the regime and progressively – or abruptly – replace the existing arrangement (Geels and Schot, 2007; Turnheim et al., 2015).

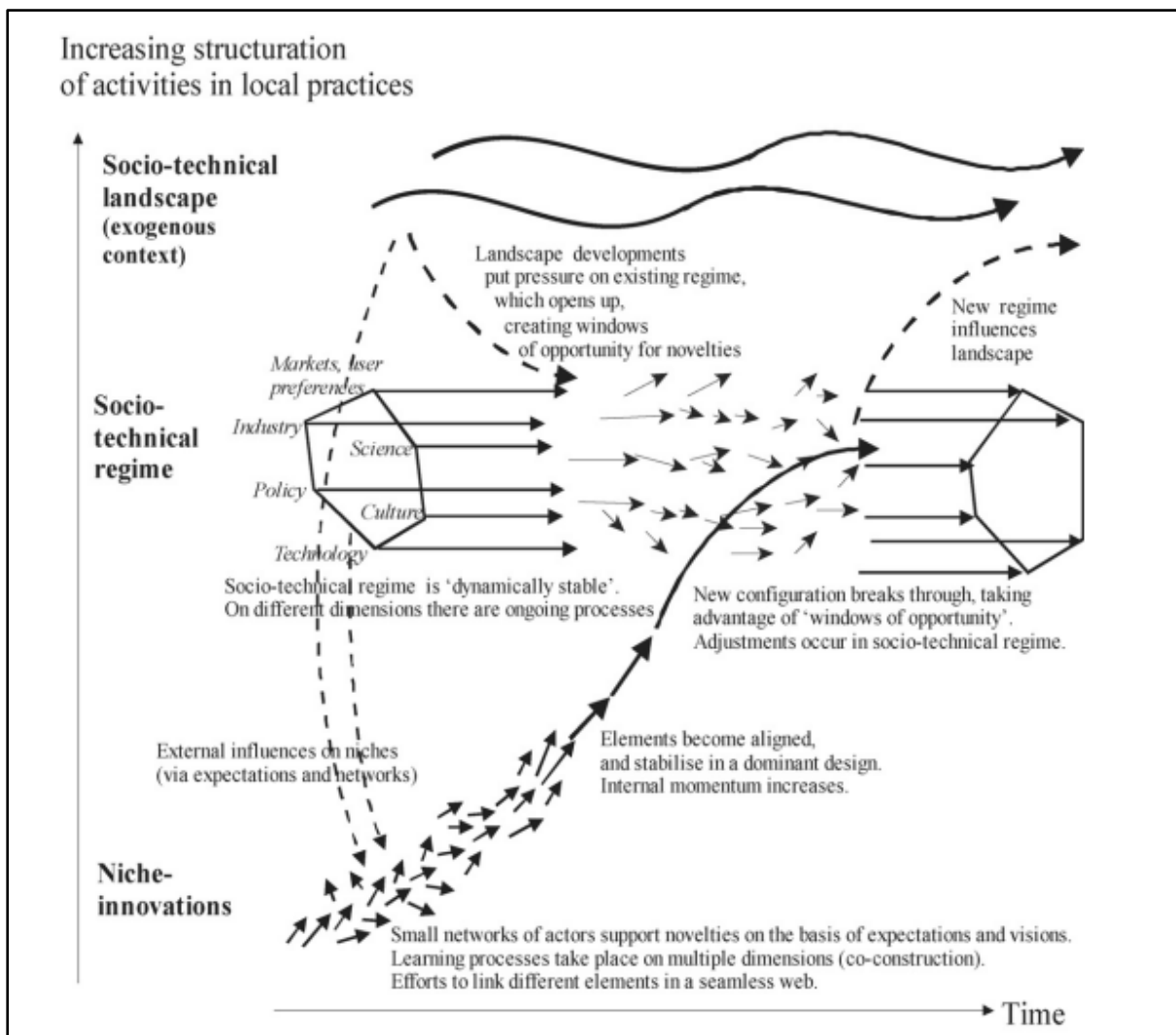


Figure 9: The multi-level perspective on transitions, Geels and Schot (2007, p. 401, figure 1)

Despite their flexibility and encompassing nature, the MLP has been subject to criticism. In a compelling work, Geels (2011) identifies seven main criticisms to the MLP (see also Geels and Schot, 2007). The first criticism points out that the MLP underplays the role of agency, power, and politics. Perhaps, this is the weakest criticism as the MLP is infused of agency at the niche and regime levels. Indeed, it is possible to find some resemblance between agency and *mindful deviation* in the MLP. Since mindful deviation is elaborated further in the next section, at this point it suffices to mention that it is the ability of actors to change or promote a shift of the pathway where they are embedded (Garud and Karnøe, 2001). Geels (2011) claims that the production and reproduction of structures (mainly niches and regimes) carried out by actors, takes place within common cognitive and time limitations. This characteristic is referred to as *bounded rationality* (see Simon, 2000). As such, actors develop common routines that are shared with other members of the same level. All in all, the MLP considers agency as a driver for transitions although it also acknowledges that agency occurs within boundaries. Yet, Geels (2011) indicates that the MLP can be complemented by other frameworks that can support the analysis of agency in more detail. In the case of this thesis, EEG – particularly path-creation – is used to enhance the analysis of agency in the MRR.

The second criticism is about the operationalisation and specification of regimes. Critics claim that the MLP does not prescribe a clear manner to identify or set an object of study. Therefore, a transition at a particular empirical level might appear as irrelevant or incremental in a different empirical level (see for instance Berkhout et al., 2004). This criticism links clearly to those calling for a spatial scale as an empirical equivalent of the three MLP analytical levels (see Raven et al., 2012). Geels (2011) argues that the MLP does not aim to provide a fix empirical level because what it offers are analytical level that can correspond to any empirical level set by the research. In other words, researchers are expected to define the empirical level before operationalising the MLP (Geels and Schot, 2007). By the same token, this criticism also refers to a blurry delineation between regime and sociotechnical system. In simple terms, regime refers to the underlying structures of sociotechnical systems whereas the latter refers to the material elements such as artefacts, infrastructure, regulation, and consumption patterns (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels, 2011; Sorrell, 2018). However, Geels (2011) acknowledges that some

researchers tend not to pay attention to this difference and use sociotechnical systems and regimes interchangeably. This thesis makes a clear differentiation between tourism sociotechnical system and tourism regime based on Hall (2016).

The third criticism is a bias towards bottom-up processes. The MLP shares this criticism with SNM. However, as indicated in the previous section, the MLP aims to tackle this bias. The MLP proposes four different pathways that depict a mixture of top-down and bottom-up interactions that make space for the unfolding of sustainability transitions (Geels and Schot, 2007; Grin, 2016; Turnheim et al., 2015). These pathways are further addressed in subsection 4.4.2, although it is pertinent to mention at this point that they pay attention to the nature of influence of landscapes on regimes. According to Geels and Schot (2007), landscapes can have a disruptive or reinforcing influence. This argument links directly to the fourth criticism that indicates that landscapes are a residual element for the MLP. Hence, the landscape level is not a mere “garbage can” as indicated by critics of the MLP (Geels, 2011, p. 36). Instead, the landscape level plays an important role whether as enabler or inhibitor of transitions (Geels and Schot, 2007). For instance, climate change – which can be considered as a landscape factor for tourism – could enable sustainable tourism initiatives in various destinations as it is the case in the MRR.

A fifth criticism focuses on the methodology that the MLP follows. According to the critics, the MLP relies on historical data “without acknowledging the debates surrounding the presentation, and use, of such data” (Genus and Coles, 2008, p. 1441). In other words, the MLP is uncritical of the historical data (often secondary) that it gathers, analyses, and uses to create the narrative of historical (and sustainability in some cases) transitions. Geels (2011) argues that, because of the complex phenomena it has to deal with, the MLP tends to be at odds with methodological assumptions. The MLP, and the narrative of transitions it creates, requires “elements of creative interpretation” (Geels, 2011, p. 36).

The last two criticism are related to philosophical issues. The sixth criticism argues that the MLP is a heuristic device and, hence, it is open to different interpretations from researchers (Genus and Coles, 2008). As a response, Geels (2011) indicates that indeed the MLP is open to interpretations as it helps to address the complex and

multidimensional nature of transitions. it is necessary to understand that the MLP is only as good as the researchers' theoretical sensitivity and interpretive creativity. the MLP is a heuristic device that allows the identification of patterns and mechanisms that underpin sustainability transitions. The seventh criticism focuses on the MLP from a relationist ontology angle that understands the world as one without levels, especially levels that evoke hierarchical arrangements. Shove and Walker (2010) argue that the MLP has a vertical ontology which would limit niche dynamics within the regime level. Geels (2011) openly accepts this criticism and holds that hierarchical connections between the three analytical levels belong to early works on the MLP that considered a nested hierarchy (Figure 10). Hence, by means of adopting a flat ontology, the MLP acknowledges that niches do not necessarily emerge within regimes (indeed it is often the exemption). Importantly, at this point it suffices to mention that ontology refers to the understanding of the nature of existence (Lawson et al., 2006). This term, deeply complex, is addressed in the following chapter.

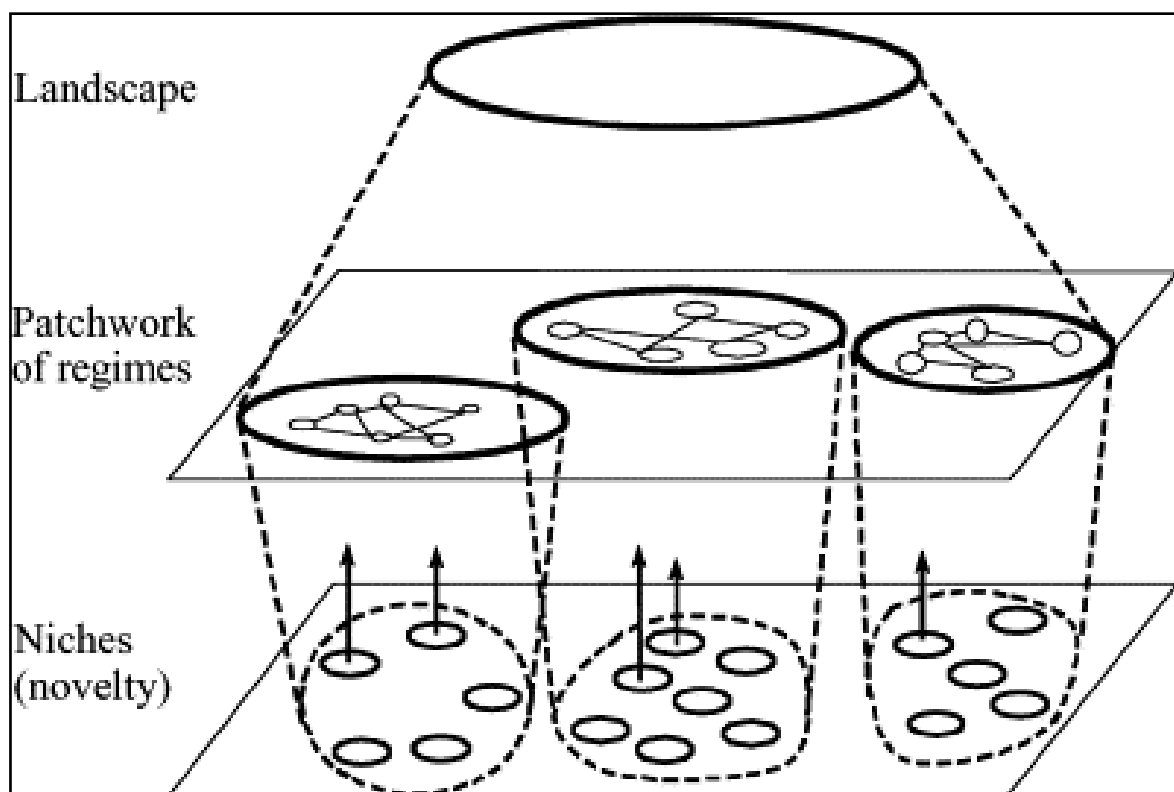


Figure 10: MLP levels as a nested hierarchy, Geels (2002a, p. 1261, figure 3)

Hence, while the MLP is far from perfect it offers a strong and flexible theoretical framework for analysing sustainability transitions. The flexibility of this approach allows the incorporation of complementary approaches (such as EEG) that can provide a more robust (and geographically embedded) analysis. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the nature and role of the three analytical levels as well as their interaction. In that sense, the next subsection explores regimes, niches, and landscapes whereas subsection 4.4.2 explores in detail the diverse interrelations between the analytical levels.

#### 4.4.1. Regimes, niches, and landscapes

By the beginning of this section, the three analytical levels of the MLP have been mentioned and some of their key features have been listed. This section focuses on each of them separately. Since it is the main level of analysis for sustainability transitions, this section begins with the regime, then the niches, and finally the landscapes.

To conceptualise regimes it is necessary to briefly take a step back and state that sociotechnical systems are a cluster of technical and social entities, including technologies, firms, supply chains, infrastructures, and regulations, that are intertwined (Geels, 2002b; Sorrell, 2018). Now, these systems represent a mixture of industries, sectors, organisations, supply and demand patterns, and social and cultural arrangement that have co-evolved over decades, satisfying a particular societal function. As a result, these systems have gained inertia and, consequently, are more reluctant to change (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels, 2005a; Sorrell, 2018). Although this has been already explained in Subsection 4.2.2, it is pertinent to refresh this explanation because it is often the case that sustainability transitions research understands sociotechnical systems as sociotechnical regimes (see for instance Holtz et al., 2008).

Sociotechnical regimes refer to the intangible elements that influence the actors that produce and reproduce dominant sociotechnical systems (Geels, 2004; Sorrell, 2018). These intangible elements can be referred to as rules. From a neo-institutional perspective these rules can be considered as institutions but, as indicated by Geels (2011, 2004b), the former term helps to avoid confusions with

public organisations. These rules (or regime) provide stability to the sociotechnical system by means of orientating social actors within the system (Smith et al., 2010). In order to provide a strong conceptual basis to analyse regimes, Geels (2004b) incorporates Scott's (1995) types of rules in the MLP (see Table 10). Since these rules (cognitive, normative, or regulative) are collectively shared by actors and elements within a given sociotechnical system, they are embedded in the system's routines, organisations, infrastructure, design, networks, technologies, and products (Markard and Truffer, 2008; Raven et al., 2012). Regime is embodied in material elements because it directly influences engineering practices, production processes, products design, skills and procedures, ways of handling relevant artefacts and persons, and ways of solving problems (Rip and Kemp, 1998). Therefore, regimes play a pivotal role in promoting incremental innovation rather than radical, which is an adaptative feature of sociotechnical systems (Geels, 2002a; Jørgensen, 2012).

Table 10: Three kinds of rules for institutions, Geels (2004b, Table 1) adapted from Scott (1995)

	<b>Regulative</b>	<b>Normative</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>
<b>Examples</b>	Formal rules, laws, sanctions, incentive structures, reward and cost structures, governance systems, power systems, protocols, standards, procedures	Values, norms, role expectations, authority systems, duty, codes of conduct	Priorities, problem agendas, beliefs, bodies of knowledge (paradigms), models of reality, categories, classifications, jargon/language, search heuristics
<b>Basis of compliance</b>	Expedience	Social obligation	Taken for granted
<b>Mechanisms</b>	Coercive (force, punishment)	Normative pressure (social sanctions such as shaming)	Mimetic, learning, imitation
<b>Logic</b>	Instrumentality (creating stability, <i>rules of the game</i> )	Appropriateness, becoming part of the group ( <i>how we do things</i> )	Orthodoxy (shared ideas, concepts)
<b>Basis of legitimacy</b>	Legally sanctioned	Morally governed	Culturally supported, conceptually correct

Regimes impose an incremental pattern in sociotechnical systems enforcing a undisrupted pathway (Markard et al., 2012b). Consequently, the actors within dominant sociotechnical systems do not aim to transform the systems but to optimise them (Rotmans et al., 2001b). Hence, in evolutionary terms, regimes function as a selection and retention mechanism (Geels, 2002a). In turn, an important insight into regimes came from the application of institutional theory to sustainability transitions. Fuenfschilling and Truffer (2014, p. 776) argued that regimes are “the most highly institutionalised core of a sociotechnical system” although they present diverse levels of structuration. While stable regimes tend to have high levels of structuration (it is strongly reluctant to change and exerts their full power over involved actors), weak regimes tend to be incoherent with limited power over actors (this is usually the case when transitions are taking place). Although, in empirical terms, regimes tend to be away from both extremes of the structuration spectrum (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014). Figure 11 presents graphically the relationship between sociotechnical system, composed by twelve elements, and the regime acting as the core structure that links all the elements within the sociotechnical system. Finally, in a recent work, Fuenfschilling and Binz (2018) suggest the existence of *global regimes* to explain the similar regime trajectories in different parts of the world with different place-specific factors. This type of regimes is a result of globalisation processes that allow the diffusion of rules beyond regional borders. As such, global regimes demonstrate that scales are built and defined by regime actors operating in different regions.

By contrast to regimes, niches are less structured, dispersed, unconnected to some extent, smaller, short-term, prompt to fail, expensive to maintain, and unstable (Kivimaa and Kern, 2016; Schot and Geels, 2008; Smith, 2007; Smith and Raven, 2012; Sorrell, 2018). Geels (2011, p. 27) defines niches as “protected spaces such as research and development laboratories, subsidised demonstration projects, or small market niches where users have special demands and are willing to support emerging innovations”. Other examples of niches are universities, army, social networks of entrepreneurs, and alternative think tanks (Essletzbichler, 2012a).

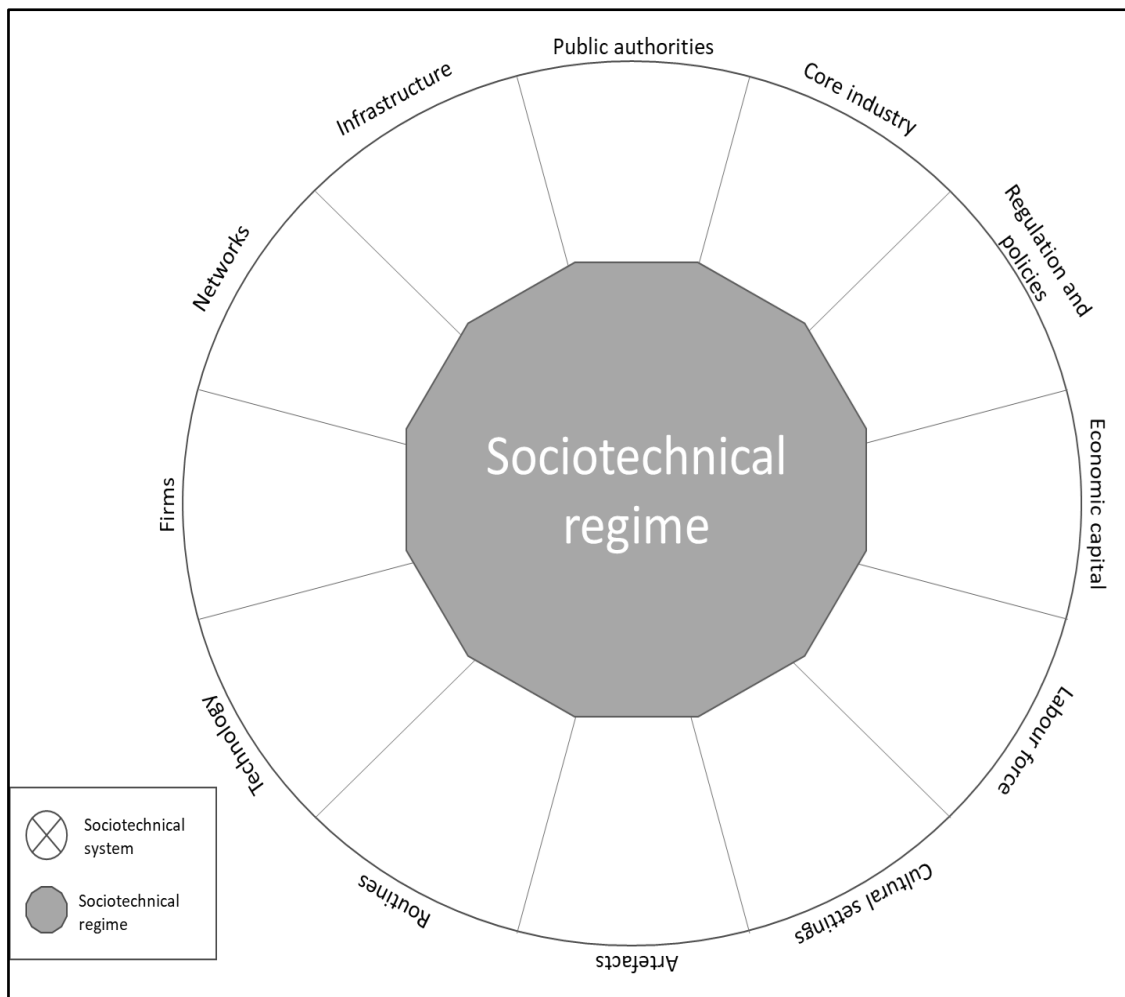


Figure 11: Depiction of regime as the core structure of a sociotechnical system, based on Fuentzschilling and Truffer (2014, figure 2)

Importantly, grassroots organisations are also examples of niches. Seyfang and Smith (2007) argue that grassroot organisations become protected spaces that allow the emergence of novelty mainly driven by social needs and alternative ideologies. The fact that many of these organisations tend to be excluded by decision-making and policymaking processes motivates them to identify, promote, and cultivate innovations attuned with just sustainability transitions (Smith and Stirling, 2017). Yet, grassroots organisations are niches that do not necessarily aim to replace regimes but to influence their trajectory (Seyfang and Longhurst, 2016; Smith et al., 2014). Table 11 presents the multiple contributions to sustainability transitions (and transitions in general) from innovation taking place in grassroots organisations.



Table 11: Grassroots organisations' contribution to sustainability transitions, adapted from Smith et al. (2016, pp. 187–188)

Contribution	Examples
Knowledge (created by grassroots organisations through their activities)	Knowledge about community aspirations and social needs Know-how in providing solutions to problems Critical knowledge about socio-economic limitations on grassroots activity
Artefacts (novel objects created by grassroots organisations)	Solar heaters, water collectors, water-cooled refrigerators
Methodologies (procedures followed by grassroots organisations to involve actors in knowledge production)	Participatory design, agroecological techniques, open and collaborative prototyping, grassroots entrepreneurship
Infrastructure (material spaces where grassroots actors can access tools and share knowledge)	Workshops, training centres, databases of open designs, shared tools, skill-swapping events, mentoring facilities, web platforms
Actors and alliances (new identities and social relations derived from grassroots organisation activities)	Grassroots innovator, innovation scout, citizen scientist, empowered community
Concepts and ideas (new ways of thinking and approaching innovation from grassroots organisations)	Appropriate social technologies, empowerment, democratising innovation, socially useful production
Capabilities (the development of new capabilities as a result of grassroots organisations' activities)	Technical and innovation capabilities, capabilities to lobby for institutional change, capabilities to claim spaces

A key feature of niches is that they are not as constrained by rules as regimes are. In other words, niches are less structured (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels and Schot, 2007). Since niches are not well-defined, stable, or restrictive, their actors can deviate from regime rules (Geels, 2004; 2002a; Jørgensen, 2012). For instance, Binz et al. (2016) indicate that niches can import knowledge and rules from niches related to other regimes in different regions due to the influence of transnational entrepreneurs, international funding organisations, global investment banks, and traveling actors. Although, as pointed out by Geels (2011), the fact that niche actors

can operate outside the level of regimes does not mean that they are not aware of the rules constraining the regimes. In fact, knowing the rules that constraint regimes gives the ability to think about new rules or mechanisms that can disrupt them (Garud and Karnøe, 2001; Hoogma et al., 2002; Smith and Raven, 2012). In that sense, niches are the embryonic platform for the development of new configurations for sociotechnical systems (Essletzbichler, 2012a; Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014).

Even though niches are challenged and often obstructed by regime rules and the inertia of sociotechnical systems (Geels, 2011; Smith et al., 2010), under adequate conditions (supportive policies, auspicious place-specific factors, interested market) they can gain *momentum* (Sorrell, 2018). The latter, at the niche scale, refers to niches increasing their structure, improving their performance, becoming cost-effective, expanding their network of actors, receiving more acceptance by users, and turning noticeable by regime actors (Geels and Schot, 2007; Sorrell, 2018). To gain momentum, niches must foster strong or potentially strong social networks, effective learning and articulation processes, and shared expectation and visions (Geels and Raven, 2006). While early work on niches often focused on localised projects, more recent developments suggest the existence of *global niches* (Geels and Raven, 2006; Raven, 2005). The concept of global niches do not refer to niches operating worldwide, but to largely diffused knowledge, cognitive rules, routines, rules of thumb, and guiding principles that are interpreted and adjusted by local niches based according to place-specific context (Geels and Raven, 2006).

Figure 12 presents the interaction between local and global niches. These interactions import, build, coordinate, aggregate, and share resources that would overall contribute to the disruption of the dominant regime by the niche (Geels and Deuten, 2006; Geels and Raven, 2006). For instance, Sengers and Raven (2015) indicate that global knowledge and lessons learned are interpreted differently, which is directly influenced by place-based policies, culture, and infrastructure.

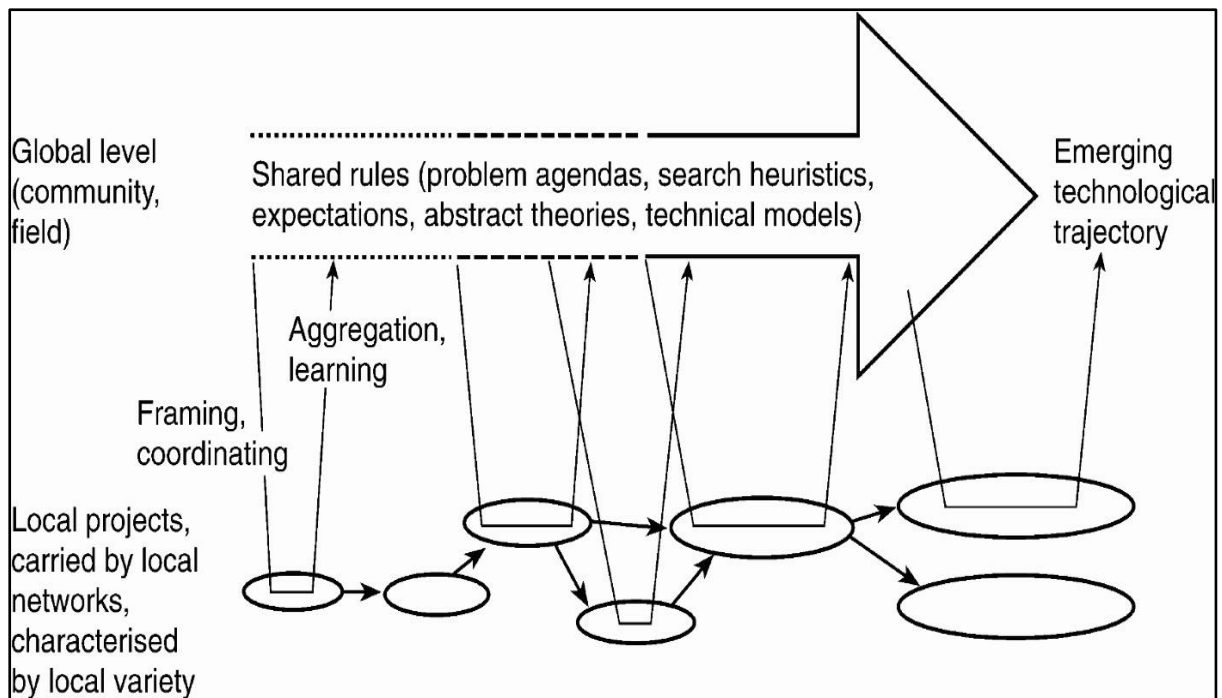


Figure 12: Technical trajectory carried by local projects, Geels and Raven (2006, p. 379, figure 3)

The third analytical level is the landscape which, as discussed previously, is not a residual level as it plays an important role in the reinforcement or triggering of sustainability transitions (Geels, 2011; Geels and Schot, 2007). Fuenfschilling and Truffer (2014) indicate that landscapes are very highly structured and therefore tend to be slow-changing (for instance, cultural values, political ideologies, climate change, demographic transitions), although, in some cases, landscape forces can manifest as *shocks* such as wars, rapid changes in oil prices, and pandemics (Correa-Martínez et al., 2020; Grin et al., 2011a). As such, landscape can be defined as the broader physical, political, economic, and sociocultural context in which sociotechnical systems develop (Berkhout et al., 2004; Geels, 2002b; Geels and Schot, 2011). The term landscape implies *hardness* in the sense that it cannot be influenced or changed by the actions of regimes or niches in the short-run (Geels, 2011; Grin et al., 2011a; Markard and Truffer, 2008). The importance of landscapes in sustainability transitions relies on the fact that they can generate opportunities for the emergence of niches (Smith et al., 2010). Extant literature refers to these opportunities as *windows of opportunities* (Geels, 2002b; Nelson and Winter, 1982).

Based on Suarez and Olivia's (2005) typology of environmental change, Geels and Schot (2007) suggest that landscapes' behaviour can follow four different patterns (see Figure 13). The first pattern, regular, often manifest mild gradual changes and do not exert intense pressures on regimes. It is possible to indicate that this type of landscape reinforces regimes. The second pattern, specific shocks, refer to rapid and intense unexpected landscape changes. After these shocks, landscapes can return to their initial configuration or can be partially or completely altered. The third pattern, disruptive changes, are not frequent and develop gradually with an intense impact on particular regime elements. The last pattern, avalanche, are also infrequent but are highly intense, rapid, and impact on multiple regime elements. The last three types of landscape patterns imply an influence on regimes. However, that impact varies depending on the degree of structuration of the regimes and the degree of maturation of the niches (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Schot and Geels, 2008).

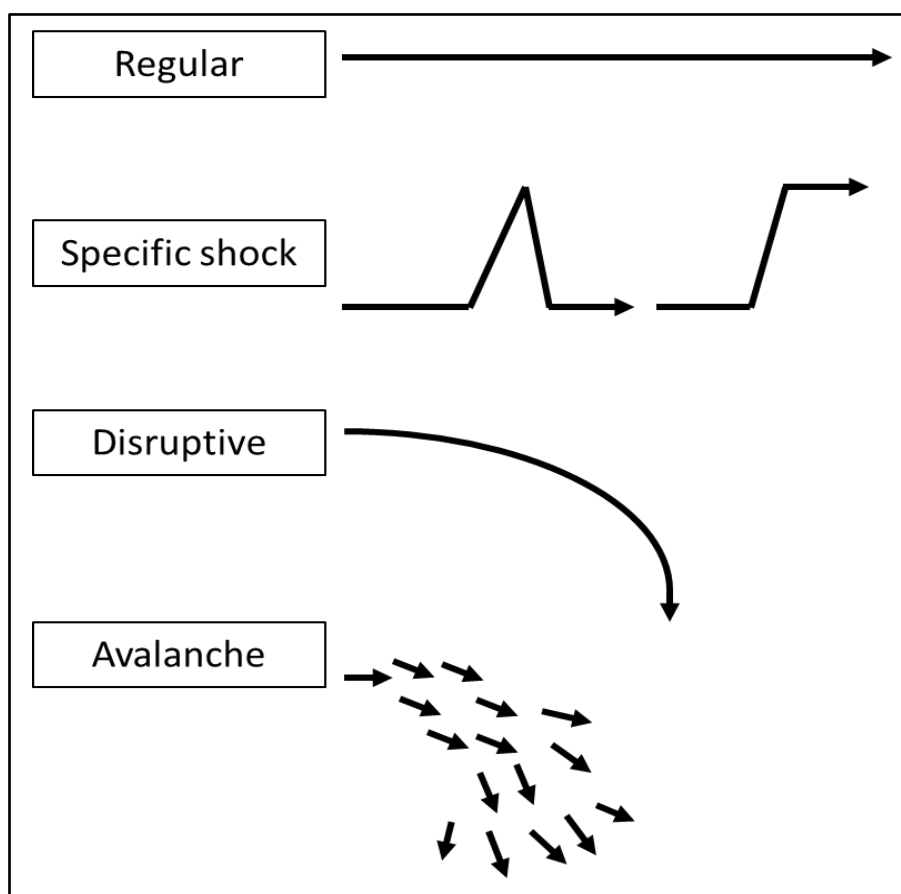


Figure 13: Types of landscape forces, based on Geels and Schot (2007, p. 404, figure 4) and Suarez and Olivia (2005)

In turn, Kivimaa et al. (2019) identify actors that are pivotal for the occurrence of sustainability transitions because they facilitate the interaction, mainly, between niches and regimes. These *intermediary actors* are a catalyst that accelerates sustainability transitions by means of linking actors involved in emerging green niches and dominant sociotechnical regimes (Hodson et al., 2013; Kivimaa et al., 2019). Kivimaa et al. (2019, p. 1069) classify intermediary actors as follows:

- Systemic intermediary: facilitators and brokers operating outside niches and regimes that promote disruption of existing dominant unsustainable regimes.
- Regime-based transition intermediary: regime actors that create spaces for the emergence of green innovations and niche interactions mainly driven by political or economic interests.
- Niche intermediary: actors within specific niches that bridge with other niches or global niches.
- Process intermediary: neutral actors that are employed in specific sustainability transition projects.
- User intermediary: actors operating within or outside niches to facilitate the interaction between end-users and green innovation.

Clearly, the three analytical levels do not take place in isolation. In fact, sustainability transitions occur due to their interaction.

#### 4.4.2. Phases of transitions and typology of transition pathways

The MLP argues that transitions (and sustainability transitions) occur due to interactions and linkages between niches, regimes, and landscapes (Geels, 2005). The multiple interactions can lead to cracks, tensions, and windows of opportunities for green innovations to make a breakthrough changing the dominant regime and, consequently, lead to a sustainability transition (Köhler et al., 2019). In that sense, this section focuses on the interactions as phases and as transition pathways.

The idea of phases of sustainability transitions is directly linked to the evolutionary nature and temporal scale of the MLP (Geels, 2002b; Geels and Schot, 2011). Rotmans et al. (2001b) identify four different phases in transitions that can map into sustainability transitions as well (see also Grin et al., 2011a, pt. 2). The phases

include predevelopment, take-off, acceleration, and stabilisation (see Figure 14). Predevelopment refers to the period when small unnoticeable changes take place within the sociotechnical system. The take-off phase is when the previously small changes gain momentum and begin to trigger structural changes in the regime. During the following phase, acceleration, structural changes become visible. In other words, the niches manage to disrupt and reconfigure the dominant regime. Finally, the stabilisation phase takes place when the sociotechnical system achieves a new stable trajectory after structural changes.

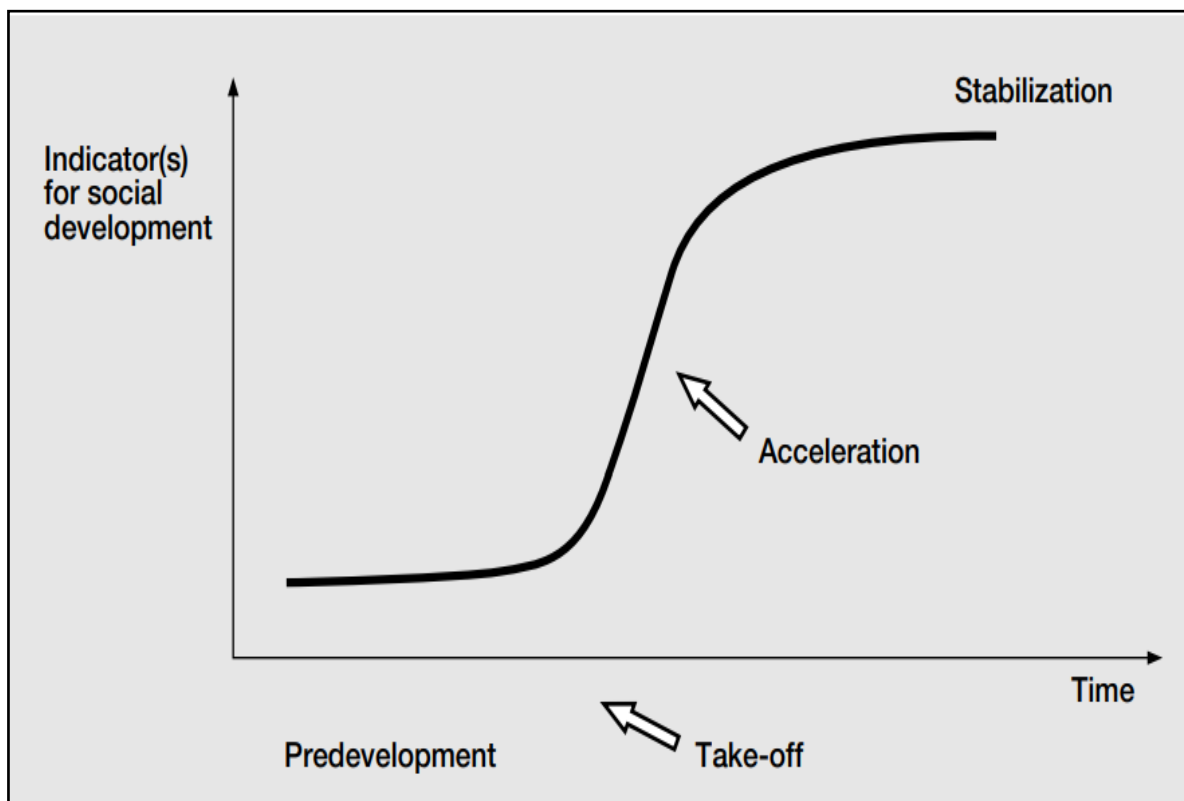


Figure 14: The four phases of transition, Rotmans et al. (2001b, p. 17, figure 2)

In a similar vein, Geels (2004, pp. 39–42) proposes four phases that, to some extent, reflect those of Rotmans et al (2001b) (see also Geels, 2005b). Those phases are:

- a) Emergence of novelty in an existing context: Niche innovations emerge in the context of existing regimes and landscape developments. However, as niches have not gained momentum, they continue their activities in the background. Geels (2004, p. 40) refers to this feature as smouldering below the surface.

- b) Technical specialisation in market niches and exploration of new functionalities: Actors in niches increase their interaction and learning, and form wider and more structured networks that manifest, for instance, as professional organisations or specialised journals. This increasing structure leads to the emergence of common rules that, in the case the niche takes over the dominant regime, become the new rules.
- c) Wide diffusion, breakthrough of new technology, and competition with established regime: The niches gain momentum as their innovations are accepted more widely, price/performance improves, and structures increase in complexity. Once niches have gained momentum, they are able to compete with the dominant regimes.
- d) Gradual replacement of established regime, wider transformations: A new regime is formed although it occurs at a gradual pace because it takes time for the empowered niches to become more cost efficient than the dominant regime even if they are declining. Another reason is that societal functions often depend on more than one market; hence, empowered niches must find ways to conquer them. Also, the role of incumbent actors is relevant as they would make efforts to maintain the decaying regime.

These phases are not rigid and can instead be adapted to the particular events and processes involved in the sustainability transition that is studied (see for instance Derwort et al., 2021). This thesis, for instance, adapts these phases to the conditions of the MRR in Chapters 6 and 8.

A more recent approach that pays attention to the types of landscape forces, regime structuration, and niche degree of maturation, is the typology of transition pathways (Grin, 2016; Schot and Geels, 2008; Turnheim et al., 2015). Geels and Schot (2008) identify five transition pathways plus a sixth one that refers to the stability of regimes due to the absence of landscape pressures (a reproduction pathway). The five pathways are transformation, de-/re-alignment, substitution, reconfiguration, and a sequential pathway. These types depend on the timing and nature of interactions. The former refers to the degree of maturation (embryonic or mature) of the niches when the landscape exerts pressures on the regime, whereas the latter depends on

whether niches and/or landscape development have a disruptive or reinforcing relationship with the regime. In terms of landscape-regime relationship this can be reinforcing or disruptive as indicated in the previous subsection. In the case of the regime-niche relationship, this can be competitive or symbiotic. Table 12 summarises the types of transition pathways with reference to the timing, and landscape-regime (L-R) and regime-niche (R-N) relationships. The sequential pathway refers to a sequence of transition pathways from the table below.



Table 12: Types of transition pathways, based on Geels and Schot (2007)

Type	Timing	Nature		Description
		L-R	R-N	
Transformation	Embryonic	Disruptive (early stages of disruptive landscape pattern)	Symbiotic	Landscape forces gradually affect the regime, but niches are incipient. Regime actors perceive the landscape changes and redirect the regime trajectory. This new regime emerges from the previous one although it has new elements from niches.
De-/re-alignment	Multiple niches at embryonic stage	Disruptive (avalanche landscape patten)	Competitive (also between niches)	The regime becomes rapidly affected by landscape changes creating uncertainty in the regime. This <i>hollowing out</i> process result on regime de-alignment. Multiple incipient niches compete to replace the weakened regime. They co-exist until one gains momentum and becomes dominant. Then, regime elements re-align in a new regime.
Substitution	Developed	Disruptive (any type)	Competitive	Under reinforcing landscape patterns, this pathway would remain as a reproduction pathway. Nonetheless, landscape pressures on the regime allows the emergence of developed niches that can substitute one or multiple regime elements.
Reconfiguration	Embryonic	Disruptive	Symbiotic	Regime actors adopt niche innovations to solve problems caused by disruptive gradual landscape forces. As landscape exerts more pressure, the adopted innovation leads to further changes in the regime until a new regime emerges.

#### 4.4.3. MLP and tourism

It is important to highlight that the MLP has not been widely used to analyse the evolution of tourist destinations (see Falcone, 2019 for exemption). Yet, its applicability to tourism and sustainability transitions in tourism can be as high as in research on other industries. In that sense, this subsection builds on some of the main approximations to tourism from a multi-level perspective in order to identify patterns and features of tourism sociotechnical system, regime, tourism innovation niches, and landscape.

According to Hall (2016), tourism can be understood as a sociotechnical system which consists of artefacts such as airports, rules such as regulations or standards, organisations such as destination marketing organisations, human resources such as hospitality labour, natural resources such as scenery landscapes, economic capital, cultural meanings, knowledge, and technology. Within the tourism sociotechnical system, it is as possible to identify features of regime, landscape, and niches as in other sectors. In the case of tourism regimes, Hall (2016) suggests that they tend to be highly persistent and require upstream social and political action to be changed, which is a common characteristic of other sociotechnical regimes (Geels et al., 2017). Without deliberately using the MLP terminology, Randelli et al. (2014) describes the tourism regime of rural tourism in Tuscany (Italy). They use the term *rural configuration* which is defined as the “semi-coherent set of rules that orient and coordinate the activities of the rural actors” (Randelli et al., 2014, p. 277). Clearly, those words built upon Geels’s work on sociotechnical transitions (see, for instance, Geels, 2004). In relation to sustainability transitions, Falcone (2019) identifies excessive bureaucracy and a lack of technology and infrastructure as likely features of tourism regimes (see also Carson et al., 2014) that hinder sustainability transitions in tourism.

With regard to the landscape level, it is possible to infer that global processes such as the growing environmental awareness (Hall, 2016) or climate change (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022) play an important role in influencing sustainability transitions in tourism (see subsection 2.2.3 and table 5 for more details). For instance, some of these landscape pressures can motivate tourism firms and visitors

to behave more responsibly in tourist destinations and stimulate the development of innovative niches to manage or mitigate tourism-related carbon emissions (e.g. Buijtendijk et al., 2018). Indeed, niches are key for sustainability transitions in tourism as they are spaces where innovations for sustainable tourism emerge and unfold (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). However, incremental non-technological innovation is more frequent in tourism than radical innovation (Booyens and Brouder, 2022; Williams, 2014), which can represent a theoretical challenge as the MLP emphasises the role of radical innovations over incremental ones (see e.g. Geels and Schot, 2007; Köhler et al., 2019). In fact, until recently, tourism has been traditionally deemed to be not a very innovative sector (Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a; Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022), especially in terms of technological innovations (Booyens, 2018; Niewiadomski, 2016; Williams, 2014). Identifying the niches where innovation for sustainable tourism emerges as well as the historical and place-specific factors that enable them are key to understand sustainability transition in tourism (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). As such, the MLP would require a suitable theoretical equipment to address tourism innovation.

In order to contribute to sustainability transitions, tourism innovation does not need to be novel but it has to have a degree of 'newness' (i.e. it has to be new to a firm or destination – see Hall and Williams, 2019) (Booyens and Brouder, 2022). This means that new or significantly improved products, processes, or practices implemented by tourism firms, organisations, authorities, entrepreneurs, labour, and even visitors, have an important role in driving sustainability transitions in tourism, especially if their cumulative effects are considered (Booyens and Brouder, 2022; Hall and Williams, 2019; Williams, 2014). In that context, innovation for sustainable tourism refers to the incorporation of multiple and diverse practices that are new to tourism firms or the destination and that aim to enhance positive environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism (Booyens and Brouder, 2022; Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a). Importantly, innovation in tourism includes the role of firms, authorities, visitors, entrepreneurs, and labour force (Williams, 2014).

Therefore, the thesis argues that a useful typology that contributes to the identification of niches in sustainability transition in tourism is Booyens and Rogerson's (2016a) categorisation of innovation in tourism. Not only because it

considers the complex nature of innovation for sustainable tourism, but it also pays attention to the cumulative effects of incremental innovation. As a result, the empirical chapters (chapter 6 to 9) will make use of the MLP informed by Booyens and Rogerson's (2016a) framework – which has already been addressed in chapter 3 (section 3.6.).

Finally, it is important to follow Niewiadomski and Brouder's (2022) recommendation to address the evolution of tourism by means of using a quasi-evolutionary middle-range theoretical framework, such as the MLP, together with EEG.

#### **4.5. Evolutionary economic geography (EEG)**

EEG emerged in the early 2000s as a distinctive and promising paradigm that incorporates history in the analysis of the economic landscape (Boschma and Martin, 2010, 2007). EEG builds on concepts and ideas from evolutionary economic, such as variety, selection, and path-dependence, to analyse economic development, industrial competitiveness, and restructuration and upgrading strategies in a given space (Boschma and Martin, 2010; Kogler, 2015; Zhu et al., 2019). Despite being relatively recent, some scholars indicate that EEG represents an evolutionary turn for economic geography (see Grabher, 2009). Yet, EEG is still a theory in development (Boschma and Martin, 2010).

Although EEG is still in the process of developing an unanimous and robust body of concepts and methods (Boschma and Martin, 2010; Dopfer and Potts, 2004; Essletzbichler and Rigby, 2007; Grabher, 2009; Sanz-Ibáñez and Anton Clavé, 2014), important progress has been made to determine its units of analysis (firms, routines, regions), its potential usefulness as an approach in economic geography (in comparison with neoclassical and institutional approaches) (see Boschma and Frenken, 2006), and its applicability in other disciplines such as urban studies, regional science, international studies, management studies, and tourism studies (Brouder, 2014a, 2014b; Zhu et al., 2019). Hence, EEG is a relatively recent, heterodox, and promising explanatory framework, built on concepts from evolutionary economics, that aims to analyse how the economic landscape evolves over time (Boschma and Martin, 2007; Kogler, 2015). As such, EEG follows the entry

or emergence, development, and exit or decline of elements in regional economic landscapes (Boschma and Frenken, 2011).

Boschma and Martin (2007, p. 539) indicates that “the basic concern of EEG is with the processes by which the economic landscape – the spatial organisation of economic production, distribution, and consumption – is transformed over time.” Considering this concern, EEG analyses the evolution of spatial phenomena such as technological progress, dynamic competitive advantage, economic restructuring, and economic growth in a specific scale (Boschma and Martin, 2010). As such, EEG pays close attention to the evolution of firms, industries, clusters, institutions in a territorial context and how those elements influence and are influenced by the interplay of structures and agency (Boschma and Frenken, 2006; Hassink et al., 2019). As a result, EEG uses key evolutionary economic concepts to address the “historically specific inconstant, uneven, and differentiated geography of capitalism” reflected in regional evolution (Boschma and Martin, 2007; Essletzbichler, 2012b, p. 187). Thus, in broad terms, an EEG lens allows research to understand the economic system in a temporal and spatial context (Boschma and Frenken, 2011; Henning, 2019). According to Boschma and Martin (2007), there are five main foci of EEG (see also Boschma and Martin, 2010; Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022):

- Spatiality of economic novelty: the influence of geography (agglomeration, proximity) in the emergence of innovation, new firms, new institutions, and other novel forms of organisation.
- Spatial structures of the economy: the emergence of regions (or other types of spatial structures such as learning spaces) from micro-behaviours of economic agents (individuals, firms, institutions)
- Self-organisation patterns: the complex self-arrangement denoted by economic landscapes in the absence of any kind of central coordination.
- Path-creation and path-dependence interaction: the influence these two (place dependent) processes have on shaping the evolution of a region. (Importantly, these concepts are addressed in detail in the following subsections).
- Spatial production of knowledge: the transfer of knowledge among actors in a given space shapes economic landscapes, but, at the same time,

economic landscapes can constraint and enable knowledge transfer (place-specific factors)

Based on these key objectives, two important aspects of EEG are relevant to this thesis. The first aspect is EEG's emphasis on the role of *place-specific factors* in shaping the trajectory of economic landscapes whereas the second aspect is EEG's focus on innovation as a process of *creative destruction* (Boschma and Martin, 2010, 2007; Kogler, 2015; Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). Place-specific factors have been referred to in previous chapters and earlier in this chapter, which denotes this thesis' geographical orientation. EEG deliberately addresses the influence that place-specific factors have on the evolution of the economic landscape (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). An important contribution of EEG in this regard lies in addressing path-dependence and related concepts as place-based processes (Martin, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2010).

Creative destruction, in turn, is not a new term (see Schumpeter, 1994 originally published in 1942). Creative destruction claims that the capitalist system is in constant change due to competition among firms – motivated by the capitalist system itself – that use innovation as an evolutionary mechanism (Kogler, 2015; Ziemnowicz, 2020). The constant search for innovation shapes spaces where novelty emerges in different ways (attracts and deters capital, labour, knowledge, routines, rules), which results in uneven geographies in terms of knowledge production and innovation (Kogler, 2015). As such, creative destruction – that can occur as slow gradual changes, waves of change, or shocks – triggers entrepreneurship which is carried out by *change agents* capable enough to shake the system through innovation (Ziemnowicz, 2020). Building on this definition, Boschma and Frenken (2007, p. 539) argue that “EEG focuses on the creative destruction of economic landscapes.”

EEG adds a spatial layer to the creation, distribution, and transfer of knowledge which is pivotal for the emergence of innovation (Boschma et al., 2017; Boschma and Frenken, 2011, 2010; Niewiadomski, 2016). Boschma and Frenken (2010) explained that the accumulation of knowledge is distributed over the economic landscapes following proximity patterns that influence the conformation of networks.

By the same token, proximity and movement of actors also contribute to the transfer of knowledge between firms (Frenken et al., 2007; Niewiadomski, 2016). This means that low and high proximity, respectively, enables or constrains firms (or other economic entities) and the transfer of knowledge between them, which facilitates innovation and, in turn, shapes uneven geographies. As Frenken et al. (2007, p. 687) argued “firms experience some form of benefit from locating near one another”. Therefore, not only firms within but also outside a given territory tend to agglomerate and locate close to each other to increase revenues.

Based on that, EEG suggests that knowledge (technology, skills, know-how) can influence in the emergence, entrance, exit, or decline of economic entities in a given territory (Hassink, 2010; Neffke et al., 2011). Concepts such as related and unrelated variety have emerged to conceptualise these relations (Frenken et al., 2007; Neffke et al., 2011). Whereas related variety occurs when the cognitive distance between industries in terms of knowledge and technology is relatively low, unrelated variety refers to situations when such a distance is high (Frenken et al., 2007). With this distinction in mind, Neffke et al. (2011) argue that industries (or other economic entities) tend to diversify into industries that are technologically related to pre-existing ones, while unrelated industries often choose to relocate. In the same vein, related variety is deemed to facilitate knowledge spill overs, and thus to influence the emergence of innovation much more strongly than unrelated variety (see Hesse and Fornahl, 2020). For instance, in the case of tourism, Erkuş-Öztürk (2018) found that hotels which recruit personnel from tourism-related businesses tend to be more innovative than those that recruit staff from elsewhere.

As already evidenced, EEG is a complex theoretical paradigm that is still under constant development (Boschma and Martin, 2010; Henning, 2019; Kogler, 2015; Sanz-Ibáñez and Anton Clavé, 2014). As such, EEG borrows and adapts several concepts from different disciplines (Henning, 2019; Martin and Sunley, 2012a, 2015). The main theoretical approaches borrowed by EEG that have been largely used to analyse evolution in other disciplines include generalised Darwinism, complexity theory, and path dependence theory (Boschma and Martin, 2010, 2007). However, in some cases, those three theories can overlap and complement each other (Sanz-

Ibáñez and Anton Clavé, 2014, p. 564). Figure 15 presents an overview of those theories including their main conceptual elements.

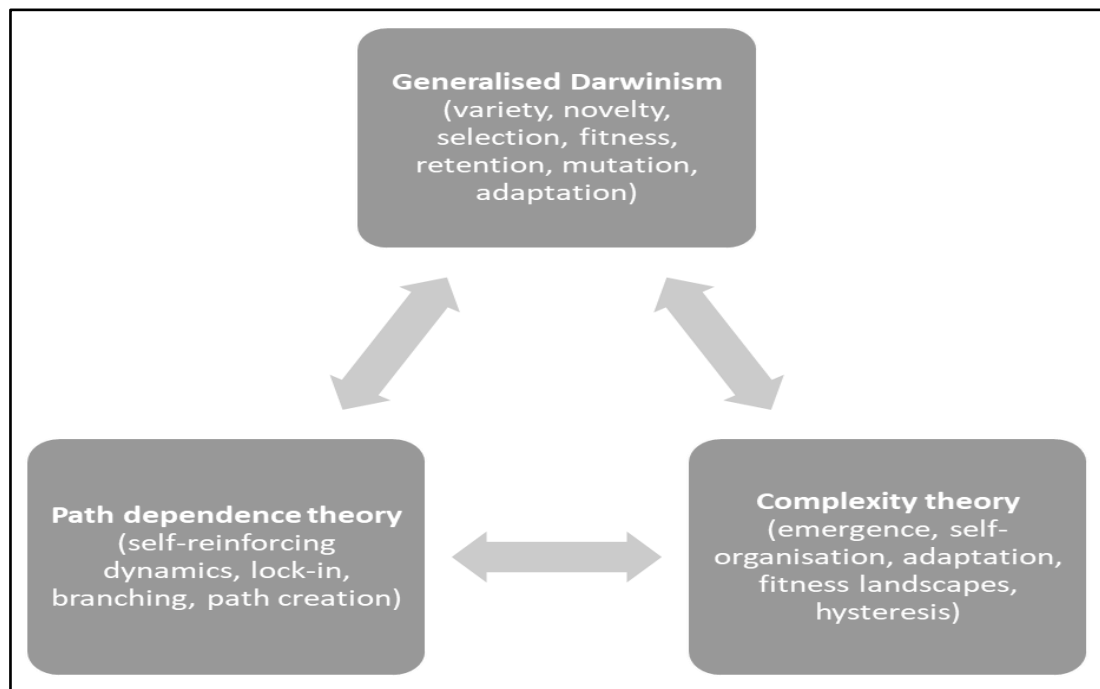


Figure 15: Three major theoretical frameworks for EEG, adapted from Boschma and Martin (2010, p. 7, figure 1.1)

While not intending to place path-dependence theory above (or below) the other two theories, the history-sensitive nature of path-dependence theory provides a rich range of theoretical resources to address the evolution of tourist destinations. Plus, sociotechnical regimes exhibit high levels of path-dependence and even lock-in whereas niches have the potential to unlock regimes and lead to path-creation (Geels, 2011). These MLP features provide the basis for a deeper elaboration of path-dependence and path-creation. In that sense, the following two subsections critically discuss path-dependence and path-creation respectively. While presenting them separately, both often take place as part of the same continuum – including in some cases path-destruction – that some scholars refer to as *path as process* (Garud et al., 2010; Hirsch and Gillespie, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2006). As such, path-creation and path-destruction are always latent in processes of path-dependence, mainly as a result of agency and mindful deviation (Martin and Sunley, 2010, 2006). An additional subsection presents an overall view of tourism evolution from an EEG perspective.



#### 4.5.1. Path-dependence and regional path-dependence

In general terms, path-dependence is a non-ergodic process or system, or in other words, a process or system that evolves as a result of its own history (Arestis and Sawyer, 2009; Garud et al., 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2012b, 2006). Despite giving history a relevant role, path-dependence cannot be reduced to a historical deterministic approach; instead, path-dependence understands the present as a passage from the past to an unknown future, and not as a fixed stage (Arestis and Sawyer, 2009; Sydow et al., 2012). Path-dependence first emerged in evolutionary economics based on the work of David (1994, 1985) and Arthur (1994, 1989). Martin and Sunley (2006) identify three main perspectives on path-dependence within evolutionary economics (see also Martin and Sunley, 2010):

- As a technological lock-in where a particular technology development tends to maintain a fixed trajectory to the detriment of others that could potentially be more efficient (see David, 1985).
- As a process of increasing returns in which switching to another path increases the costs over time (see Arthur, 1989).
- As an institutional hysteresis that considers institutions as carriers of history that self-reproduce over time (see North, 1990).

The core argument of these perspectives (the basic model of path-dependence) is that it is possible to identify contingent or random events along the historical trajectory of an economic entity (firms, network, industry) that led to a self-reinforcing process without escape (a condition Martin and Sunley, 2010, referred to as *lock-in*). As such, they assumed an *equilibrium state* in the evolution of economic entities that, if once reached, would be stable and reluctant to change (lock-in) until an external force disrupts such stability (Martin and Sunley, 2010, 2006; Simmie, 2012). Figure 16 summarises the main stages of the basic model of path-dependence. As noted in that figure, the basic model has a few caveats. For instance, it does not address the processes prior to path-creation or after path-dissolution, considers external shock as the only unlocking mechanisms, and leaves agency and place out of the analysis to some extent.

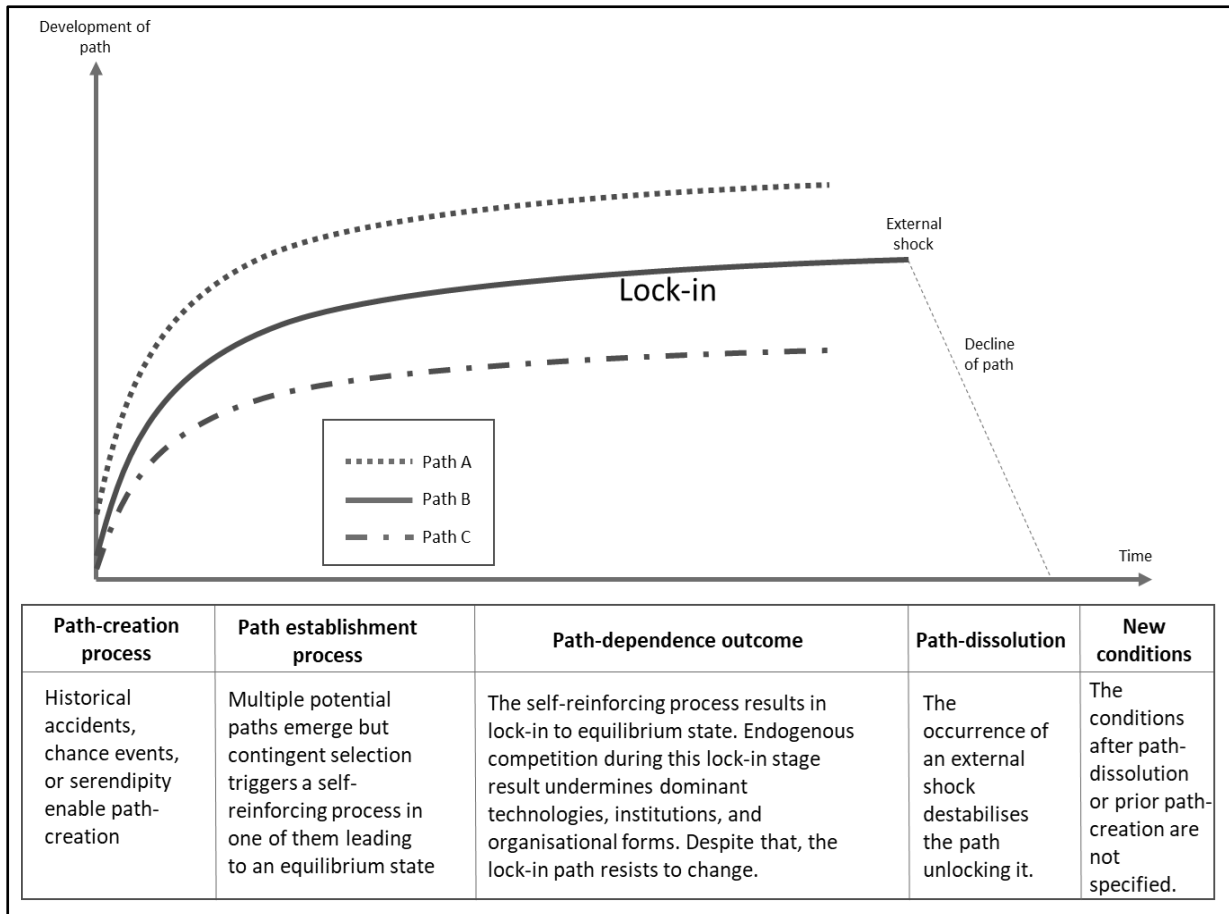


Figure 16: Basic model of path-dependence, based on Martin and Sunley (2010, p. 73, figure 3.2) and Simmie (2012, p. 755, figure 1)

EEG borrowed path-dependence from evolutionary economics. By contrast to evolutionary economics, EEG argues that evolution is far from equilibrium or, in other words, that the evolution of the economic landscape does not tend towards a permanent stable stage (Martin and Sunley, 2010, 2006). As a result, EEG understands path-dependence as a process where at every point in the history of an economic entity there are multiple trajectories, with none of them stable, some more likely to happen than others, and contingent on the past and current conditions of the path in question (Martin and Sunley, 2006). From this perspective, a path-dependent trajectory is an open system that evolves in ways determined by its past developments (Boschma and Martin, 2010). The most prominent model of path-dependence in EEG is that of Martin (2010). This model presents four phases (preformation, path-creation, path-development, and path-dependence), and two possible options of path-dependence (one leading to a stable state and the other to a dynamic process).

Hence, this model argues that path-dependence is a process and an outcome. Figure 17 depicts that model and proposes the example of pathways A and B. Pathway A follows a path-dependent process leading to regional path-destruction that can constrain its development and result in a similar path-dependent process. However, that new path-dependent process can follow a different trajectory (pathway B) that can enable a constant renewal or a new pathway. This denotes that from an EEG perspective, path-dependence is an open-ended system. Therefore, the remainder of this section builds on Martin's (2010) model of path-dependence.

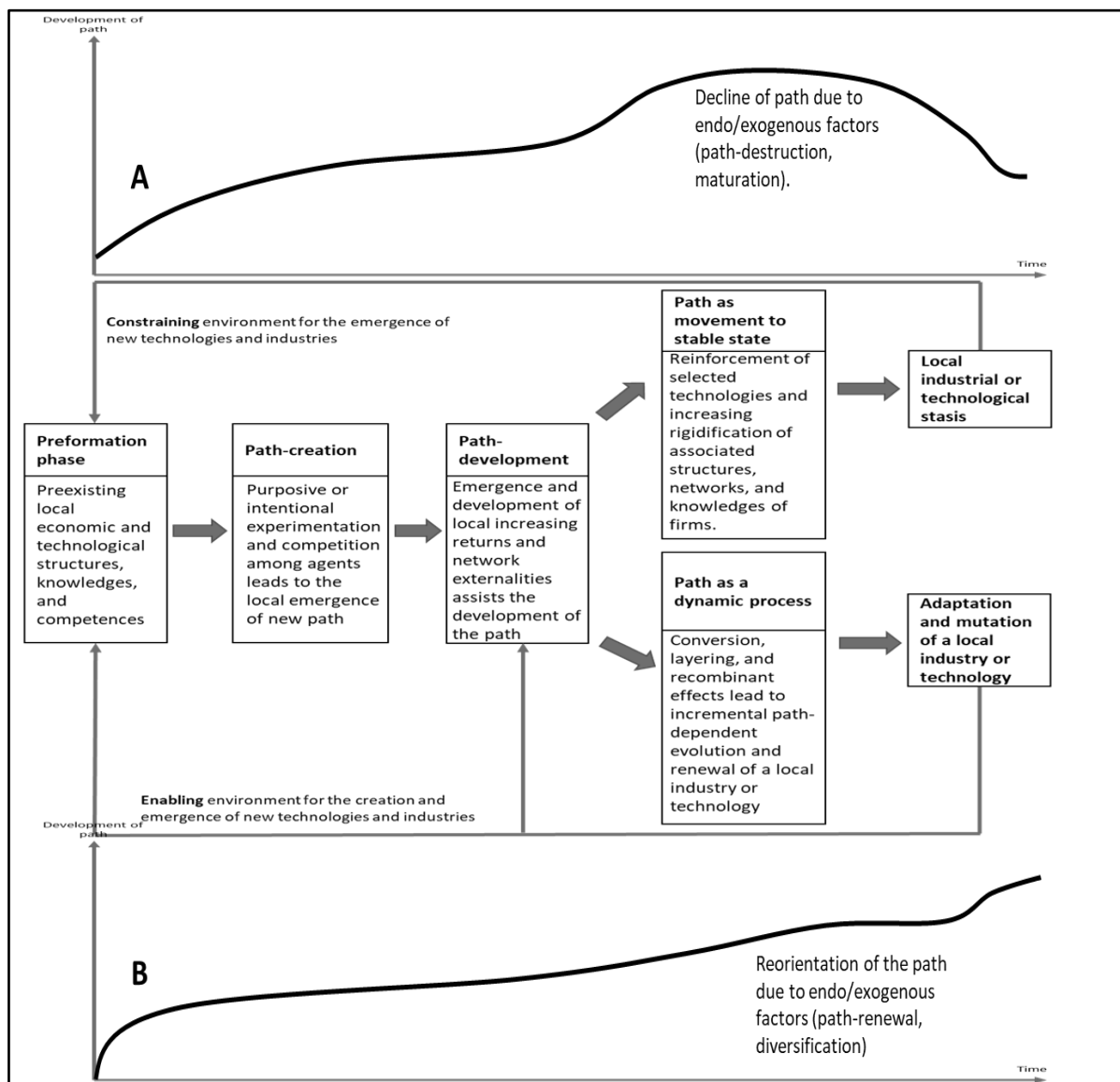


Figure 17: Martin's alternative path-dependence model, based on Martin and Sunley (2010, p. 75, figure 3.4) and Martin (2010, p. 21, figure 5)

Building on Martin's (2010) model of path-dependence, EEG has further developed the concept of path-dependence by means of exploring the role of space and place in path-dependent processes (Boschma and Martin, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2006). In that sense, EEG uses the notion of *regional path-dependence* as it considers that path-dependence is a place-dependent process because the conditions that lead to the prior are locally contingent (Cheung and Kwong, 2017; Ma and Hassink, 2014; Martin, 2010). This means that, for instance, "pre-existing resources, competences, skills, and experiences that have been inherited from previous local paths and patterns of economic development" (Martin, 2010, p. 20) can influence the self-reinforcing trajectory of a given region.

Hence, regional path-dependence as a self-reinforcing process entails that regional place-specific factors are a result of the evolution of the region and, at the same time, contribute to the region's evolution by constraining specific paths (Baumgartinger-Seiringer et al., 2022; Martin, 2010). This EEG perspective moves the focus from random accidental events as drivers of path-dependence to place-specific factors as the main drivers. Yet, the former should not be entirely left outside the analysis (Baggio and Sainaghi, 2011; Sydow et al., 2012). Table 13 presents the possible sources of regional path-dependence. As noted, they range from local resources, cultural attributes, local institutions, and interregional interdependencies.

The idea of *region* can trigger some complications as they often encompass various internal ensembles (multiple industries, multiple firms, diverse organisations) that can even interact outside the region boundaries (see Essletzbichler, 2012b; Martin and Sunley, 2006). Martin and Sunley (2006) acknowledge that each region is a complex configuration of firms, industries, and technologies, and each individual component may be following its own path-dependent trajectory. If individual sectors in a region evolve independently of each other, such a condition is referred to as *multiple unrelated path-dependence*. By contrast, if sectors interact with each other and develop inter-linkages (which is a fairly common scenario in a regional context), then the region may exhibit a degree of *multiple related path-dependence* (Martin and Sunley, 2006). Furthermore, if such interlinkages 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, 2012b, 2006).

Table 13: Possible sources of regional path-dependence, Martin and Sunley (2006, p. 412, Table 4)

Source	Features
Natural resource based	Region's development path shaped by dependence on a particular raw material (for instance, coal, oil, forestry products, etc.), and the technical possibilities this provides for related and derived industries.
Sunk costs of local assets and infrastructures	Durability ( <i>quasi-irreversibility</i> ) of a region's capital equipment, especially in heavy industries, and its physical infrastructures, such as urban built form, transport system and the like, which remain in use, and shape economic development possibilities, because fixed costs are already sunk' while variable costs are lower than total costs of replacement.
Local external economies of industrial specialisation	Local industrial districts and clusters of specialized economic activity characterized by Marshallian-type dynamic externalities and untraded interdependencies—common pool of specialist skilled labour, dedicated suppliers and intermediaries, local knowledge spill overs and local co-ordination effects in terms of business mechanisms, such as networks of co-operation, business practice conventions, etc., all of which create a high degree of local economic <i>interrelatedness</i> .
Regional technological <i>lock-in</i>	Development of a distinctive specialized regional technological regime or innovation system through processes of local collective learning, mimetic and isomorphic behaviour, dedicated technology and research organizations, interfirm division of labour and other forms of technical interrelatedness.
Economies of agglomeration	Generalized self-reinforcing development based on various agglomeration externalities, such as a diverse labour pool, large market, thick networks of input–output relations, suppliers, services, and information. Wide scope for various specialist functions and activities.
Region-specific institutions, social forms, and cultural traditions	Development of locally specific economic and regulatory institutions, social capital, social infrastructures, and traditions, all which embed economic activity into local trajectory.
Interregional linkages and interdependencies	Development paths in a region may be shaped by those in other regions, though intra-industry and interindustry linkages and dependencies; reliance on financial institutions elsewhere; and influence exerted by economic and regulatory policies pursued in other regions and at national level (or even beyond). Regional development paths co-evolve in complex way.

Furthermore, research on regional path-dependence has also questioned the necessary negative connotation of lock-in. Early studies suggested that lock-in was a negative condition as *locked-in regions* exhibit a high degree of institutional rigidification and a low degree of adaptability (see Arthur, 1989; Grabher, 1993). In that regard, Grabher (1993) catalogued three types of negative lock-in:

- Functional, where consolidated firms' interrelation blocks the emergence of small similar ones.
- Cognitive, where a common-world view is constructed from socioeconomic interactions overlooking alternative trajectories or unlocking strategies.
- Political, where strong institutional factors hamper transitions to alternative paths.

Building on the latter, Hassink (2010) uses the term *regional lock-in* to refer to the manifestation of interrelated types of negative lock-in at the regional level due to intra- and inter-regional factors. Nevertheless, he also acknowledges that positive regional lock-in is possible. Indeed, EEG research suggests that regions can undergo positive and/or negative lock-in (Brekke, 2015; Martin and Sunley, 2006) as a result of ongoing path-dependent processes (Sydow et al., 2012). Positive lock-in has been conceptualised as a stage that can occur before a negative lock-in. In this case, a state of lock-in entails economic growth and a high variety due to the alignment and knowledge transfer between different elements within the region. Nonetheless, these conditions lead to a negative lock-in as institutions become rigid, competition within and outside the region undermine the region's status quo, and innovation struggles to occur. Therefore, while some regions undergo an economic decline after a positive lock-in, others have been able to adapt and promote sequential phases of positive lock-in as noted in Figure 18 (Martin and Sunley, 2006).

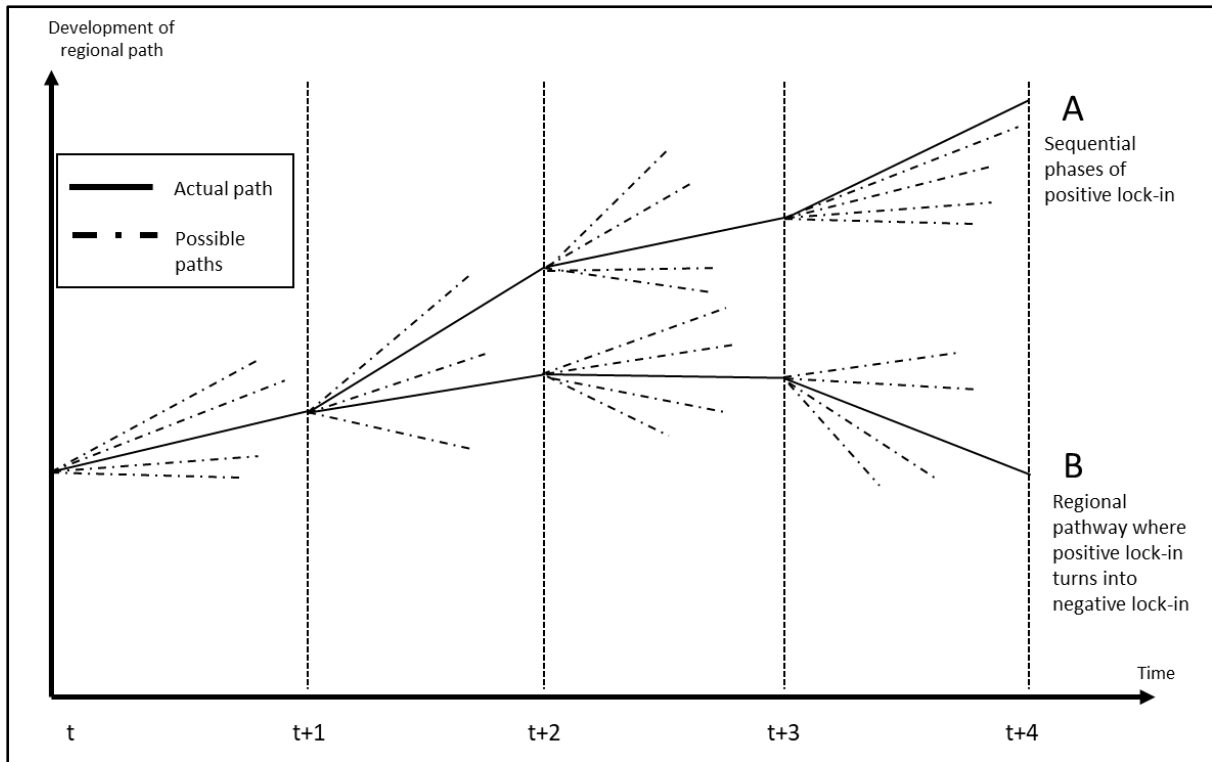


Figure 18: Different path-dependent regional pathways, based on Martin and Sunley (2006, p. 418, figure 2)

While this section demonstrates that path-creation tends to co-exist with path-dependence, it is necessary to address in more detail the concept of path-creation as it gives the opportunity to discuss the role of agency in the emergence of new paths.

#### 4.5.2. Regional path-creation

According to the evolutionary economic perspective on path-creation (or path-shaping processes), new paths emerge due to exogenous historical accidents, chance events, or random actions. Those new paths undergo a series of contingent pressures that select a specific new path (see for instance David, 1985). However, this approach does not pay close attention to the role of agency as an endogenous force for change (Coenen et al., 2017). Thus, EEG incorporates the role of agency, especially of informed and organised actors such as scientists, politicians, and entrepreneurs, but also the role of place and institutional embeddedness into the analysis of path-creation (Garud and Karnøe, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2010; Sydow et al., 2012).

Hassink et al. (2019) indicate that other actors and groups must be incorporated in the analysis of path-creation such as universities, research institutes, and state at different scales. By the same token, place and institutional embeddedness imply that new paths are influenced by the context in which mindful deviation takes place. In other words, path-shaping processes are not sudden breaks from former paths. Mindful deviation, from an EEG perspective, implies that actors embedded in a previous path and place promote a new trajectory that requires new institutional and social arrangements (Garud et al., 2010; Garud and Karnøe, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2006). In that sense, previous regional paths could influence new paths as existing economic, social, cultural, and institutional conditions can enable or constrain new trajectories (Martin, 2010).

According to Martin and Sunley (2010, 2006), regional path-creation can occur due to endogenous and, to a lesser extent, exogenous factors, as a consequence of actors attempting to unlock the pathway in which they are embedded (see Table 14). However, Trippi et al. (2018) highlight the contribution of exogenous actors to path-shaping processes, especially in peripheral resource-based regions where innovation tends to be merely incremental. The interaction of regional and non-regional actors can move resources in terms of investment, knowledge, and competences, to favour an intended new trajectory (Brekke, 2015; Garud et al., 2010; Hassink et al., 2019; Martin, 2010). In that sense, path-creation is a radical regional shift as it implies breaking with institutional lock-in and the emergence of new regional economic elements (industries, firms, organisations) with new rules and knowledge (Brekke, 2015; Isaksen, 2015). The latter is pivotal for the emergence of radical innovation. Hence, path-creation can be understood as a mechanism the region from negative lock-in or as an effective attempt to maintain sequential phases of positive lock-in.



Table 14: Sources of path-creation as unlocking mechanisms, Martin and Sunley (2006, Table 5)

Sources of new path	Characteristics
Indigenous creation	Emergence of new technologies and industries from within the region that have no immediate predecessors or antecedents there.
Heterogeneity and diversity	Diversity of local industries, technologies and organisations promotes constant innovation and economic reconfiguration, avoiding lock-in to a fixed structure.
Transplantation from elsewhere	Primary mechanism is the importation of a new industry or technology from elsewhere, which then forms basis of new pathway of regional growth.
Diversification into related industries	Transition where an existing industry goes into decline, but its core technologies are redeployed and extended to provide the basis of related new industries in the region.
Upgrading of existing industries	The revitalisation and enhancement of a region's industrial base through the infusion of new technologies or introduction of new products and services

To analyse how agency could trigger new regional paths, Grillitsch and Sotarauta (2020) suggest the interrelation of three types of agency:

- Innovative entrepreneurship, which promotes the emergence of path-breaking innovations leading to new industrial developments;
- Institutional entrepreneurship, which is a key factor as risk-taking and opportunity-oriented institutions can favour entrepreneurship activity leading to the adaptation and creation of new institutions; and
- Place-based leadership, which is necessary in path-shaping processes (which tend to be complex multi-actor processes) as *leaders* could promote orchestrated actions to favour a particular trajectory.

This *trinity of change*, according to the authors, is useful in understanding why regions with similar pre-conditions undergo different path-development processes. It also emphasises that agency has a strategic and distributed nature (Bækkelund, 2021; Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2020, 2018). The former manifests in the understanding that some actors can have about the caveats of the existing pathway where they are embedded and the potential outcomes of promoting new paths. In

turn, the latter implies that agency manifests due to the action and interaction of multiple regional actors (Garud and Karnøe, 2005; Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2018)

Finally, as mentioned in the previous subsection, path-creation and path-destruction are latent in path-dependent processes. As such, it is possible to infer that the emergence of new paths could overlap with the dissolution of older ones that could, in some cases, generate conflicts (Hirsch and Gillespie, 2001; Schienstock, 2007). Precisely, path-destruction, that is a consequence of a lack of variety and heterogeneity in the economic landscape, can be influenced by the expansion and growth of newer paths (Flood Chavez et al., 2023; Glückler, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2006).

#### 4.5.3. EEG approaches to tourism

By contrast to the MLP, EEG has been widely used in research on the evolution of tourist destinations (see, for instance, Brouder, 2014b; Clavé and Wilson, 2017; Gill and Williams, 2014; Randelli et al., 2014). This subsection highlights the main work on the evolution of tourist destinations from an EEG lens. This is the work of Ma and Hassink (2014, 2013) that builds on Martin's (2010) model of path-dependence.

Tourism, as a global phenomenon, promotes the transformation of places or regions to become more attractive to tourists (Saarinen, 2004). Therefore, to analyse how that transformation or evolution occurs within and between regions has been an objective of various research endeavours (see Brouder and Eriksson, 2013b; Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017). One of the first main attempts to analyse the evolution of tourism destinations was the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model (Butler, 1980) that provided a base for several studies (see Figure 19). The most recent studies are related to the rejuvenation of destinations to avoid their decline (see Butler, 2006). However, such model has been criticised, among other issues, because it does not pay close attention to the mechanisms that lead to changes in destinations (see Gale and Botterill, 2005; Ma and Hassink, 2013; Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017). Yet, this model has been used largely to analyse the evolution of various destination including the Margaret River region (see Figure 20). According to Figure 20, the MRR is in the consolidation stage and could potentially reach the stagnation stage (2010).

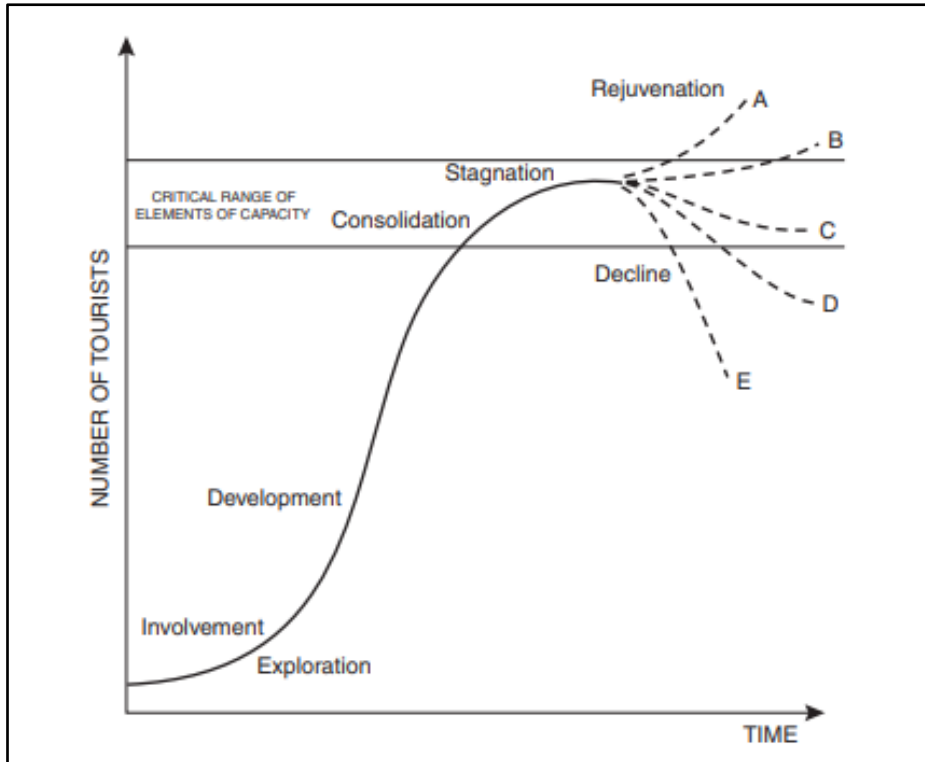


Figure 19: Tourism area life cycle (TALC), Butler (1980, p. 7, figure 1)

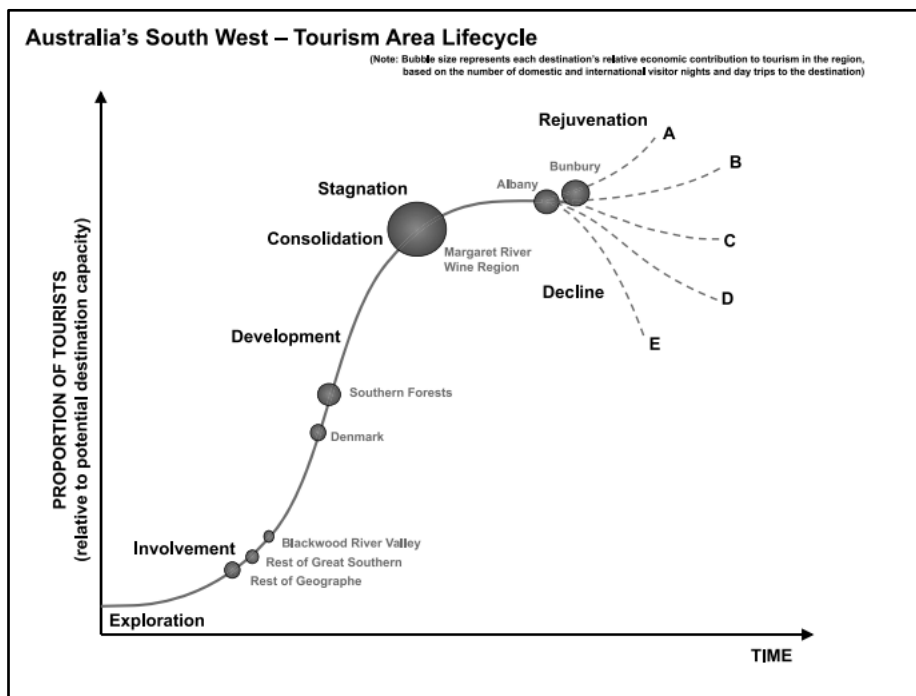


Figure 20: TALC of destinations in WA's South West, Tourism WA (2010, p. 8, Figure 3)

Considering the limitations of the TALC model and on the emergence of the *evolutionary turn* in economic geography, more recent research on tourism has begun to incorporate EEG concepts into the analysis of the evolution of tourism destinations (see Brouder, 2014b; Brouder and Eriksson, 2013b; Ma and Hassink, 2014; Sanz-Ibáñez and Anton Clavé, 2014). Particularly, path-dependence has been one of the concepts employed in such analysis most often. Indeed, since tourism is a place-based industry and regional path-dependence a place-dependent process (see the previous section), it is evident that the latter can serve as an explanatory paradigm for the evolution of the former (Brouder and Eriksson, 2013b). Path-dependence, path-creation, and, to a lesser degree, path-destruction, have been present in tourism research, often not in isolation (see chapters in Brouder et al., 2016).

Path-dependence and path-creation in tourism destinations tend to be part of a continuum (path as process), which makes it challenging to distinguish between both. This continuum reflects stakeholders' constant search for diversification in tourist destinations to avoid lock-in and decline. An encompassing perspective on the dynamics of paths in tourism destinations is Ma and Hassink's (2013) path-dependence model built upon Martin's (2010) work (see Figure 21). The authors apply that model to Australia's Gold Coast and to Guilin (China) (Ma and Hassink, 2014, 2013). For instance, this model understands the evolution of tourism destinations as "(...) a dynamic open path-dependent process by which products, sectors and institutions co-evolve along unfolding trajectories" (Ma and Hassink, 2013, p. 98). Likewise, the model emphasises the importance of initial conditions such as natural or cultural resources, location advantage, and adventurer's experience, in addition to path-dependent policies or path-shaping events.

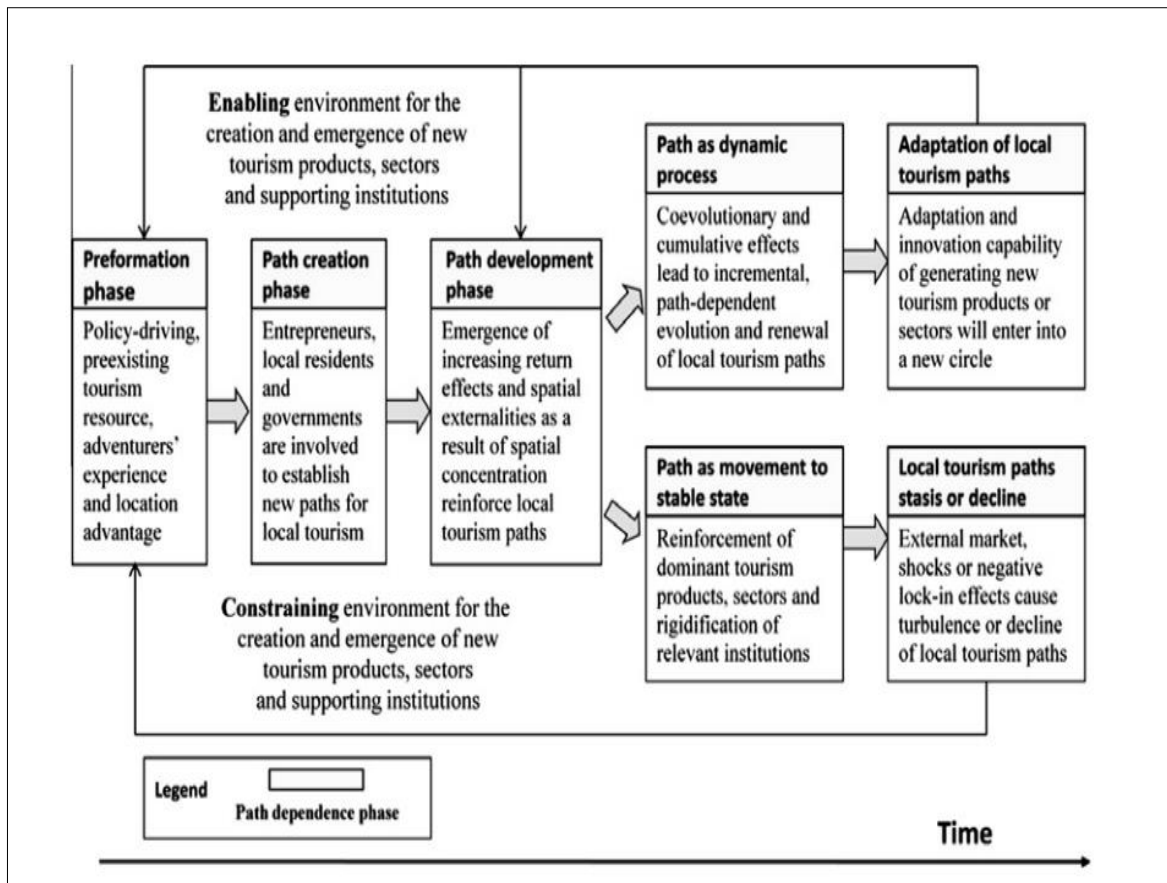


Figure 21: Martin's model of path-dependence adapted for tourist destinations, Ma and Hassink (2013, p. 96, figure 1)

More recently, the *moments* approach proposed a deeper and holistic focus on the particular mechanisms that influence new trajectories in tourism destinations which are "(...) beyond the natural environment and general economic trends, principally social and cultural ones" (Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017, p. 85). This approach provides a deeper engagement with the shifts that take place during the evolution of a destination, considering the context where they take place, the triggering event or events that lead to a new trajectory, and the consequent events that follow. David (1985) describes triggering events as small and random, while Sydow et al. (2012) indicate that they are decisive and powerful as, in fact, they can induce path-creation (see also Martin and Sunley, 2012b).

EEG – especially path-dependence theory – is an important and useful framework to understand the evolution of tourist destinations such as the MRR. For instance, Flood Chavez et al. (2023) use this framework to understand the interactions of the

tourism industry in the MRR with other regional industries such as timber, dairy, and wine, along the region's history.

#### **4.6. Summary and conclusions**

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework of this thesis. The first theoretical framework is the MLP which has been proved useful to analyse historical and sustainability transitions. This chapter focused on its applicability on sustainability transitions research. As such, this chapter argues that the MLP is useful to understand sustainability transitions as a result of the interactions between niches, regimes, and landscapes. Niches are the protected spaces where green innovation takes place, regimes consist of the rules of the dominant and often unsustainable – or partially sustainable – sociotechnical system, and landscape represents the context that reinforces or disrupts regimes and niches. Despite its usefulness, the MLP has not been widely used (see Falcone, 2019 for exemption) to address sustainability transitions in tourism.

EEG is the second theoretical framework utilised by this thesis. EEG analyses the evolution of the economic landscape by means of paying attention to place, history, and the role of innovation. EEG borrows theories mainly from evolutionary economics. Among these theories, the most useful one to address historical evolution, emergence of innovation, agency, and place-specific factors is path-dependence theory, including path-creation. As such, regional path-dependence provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding the persistent trajectory of a region (or a regional economic entity) to the extent that it becomes rigid and prone to decline. In turn, regional path-creation appears as a process of mindful deviation that, although influenced by the existing path and place features, aims to open new regional paths. These new paths can be in the form of sequential phases of positive lock-in or completely new paths. As any process of mindful deviation, path-creation entails strategic and distributed agency.

EEG (in the sense of path-dependence or path-creation) and the MLP complement each other and create a strong theoretical framework for this thesis. Regimes can be understood as path-dependent configurations whereas niche innovations act as path-shaping processes. In turn, the high structuration of regimes can be assumed

as a result of lock-in processes. More importantly, using both frameworks addresses the role of place-specific factors and distributed agency, the historical processes shaping regimes and niches, the interaction between niche and incumbent (dominant regime) actors, and the understanding of sustainability transitions as evolutionary processes. Hence, this chapter contributes to expanding the analysis of the evolution of tourist destinations by adding the MLP and sustainability transition research to the already powerful framework of EEG. As a result, by means of using both frameworks, this thesis aims to provide a more detailed explanation about how tourist destinations change spatially and historically.

The following chapter will serve as a bridge between the theoretical chapters that provided key concepts for this thesis, and the empirical chapters. Chapter 5, which is the methodological chapter of this thesis, addresses the way in which the data used and analysed in this thesis has been gathered. It also provides a brief discussion of the ontological and epistemological grounds of this thesis. Finally, considering that the literature review chapters have made emphasis on the geographical unevenness of sustainable development, green economy, sustainable tourism, and sustainability transitions due to *inter alia* place-specific factors, Chapter 5 also presents a brief spatial and historical description of the Margaret River region.

## Chapter 5.

### Researching the transition of the Margaret River region as a tourist destination

*“(...) the task of philosophy is not to provide answers, but to show how the way we perceive a problem can be itself part of the problem”*  
(Slavoj Zizek, 2011)

#### 5.1. Introduction

Building on the theoretical framework, this chapter explains the research strategy adopted in this thesis to respond to the research questions, and the methodological elements that support it. Considering that this thesis focuses on sustainability transitions – a complex evolutionary place-specific multi-actor processes – at the destination level, the research strategy had to address the place-specific factors and the historical processes that have shaped the tourism sector in the Margaret River region (MRR). Hence, the research strategy had to overcome theoretical and empirical challenges to capture the causal mechanisms and complex interactions among actors that underlie the tourism sector in the MRR and its potential sustainability transition. The main challenge lies on the fact that this thesis – to the knowledge of its author – is one of the first attempts to address sustainability transitions in tourism from a multi-level perspective (MLP) and evolutionary economic geography (EEG) perspective. As such, this thesis faces the same challenges that early work on sustainability transitions had in other sectors such as identifying the empirical equivalents of the MLP analytical levels, setting the historical scope of the research, and capturing the geographical unevenness of the area of study.

This chapter consists of five further sections. Section 5.2 discusses the philosophical grounds that underpin this thesis. Section 5.3 describes the general research strategy while sections 5.4 and 5.5 outline the processes of data collection and data analysis respectively. Section 5.6 addresses the issues of power, positionality, and ethics involved in this research project. Before summarising and providing conclusions in section 5.8, this chapter provides a brief description of the area of study – the Margaret River region, in section 5.7.



## 5.2. Grounding the research

To produce academically valid research in geography (and in other disciplines) it is necessary to address its philosophical grounds (Graham, 2005) to ensure the methodology is aligned with an appropriate empirical strategy to access, analyse, and assess its *object of study* (Graham, 2005; Moses and Knutsen, 2007). In other words, the methodology commits the research to a philosophical basis including ontological and epistemological bases (see Figure 22) (Edwards et al., 2014; Graham, 2005). Ontology, as briefly explained in the previous chapter, focuses on the study of *being* and provides particular assumptions of what exists that can be researched (Proudfoot and Lacey, 2009). In social sciences, ontology enquires into the nature of social and political reality (Blaikie, 2019; Grix, 2002). In turn, *epistemology* focuses on the study of *knowledge* and is concerned with its nature (Moses and Knutsen, 2007). In social sciences, epistemology is concerned with the manners through which it is possible to learn about social reality (Blaikie, 2019; Bryman, 2015; Grix, 2002). Both ontological and epistemological assumptions define the logic of the research including the methods of data gathering and analysis (Bryman, 2015; Grix, 2002; Mjøset, 2009; Moon and Blackman, 2014).

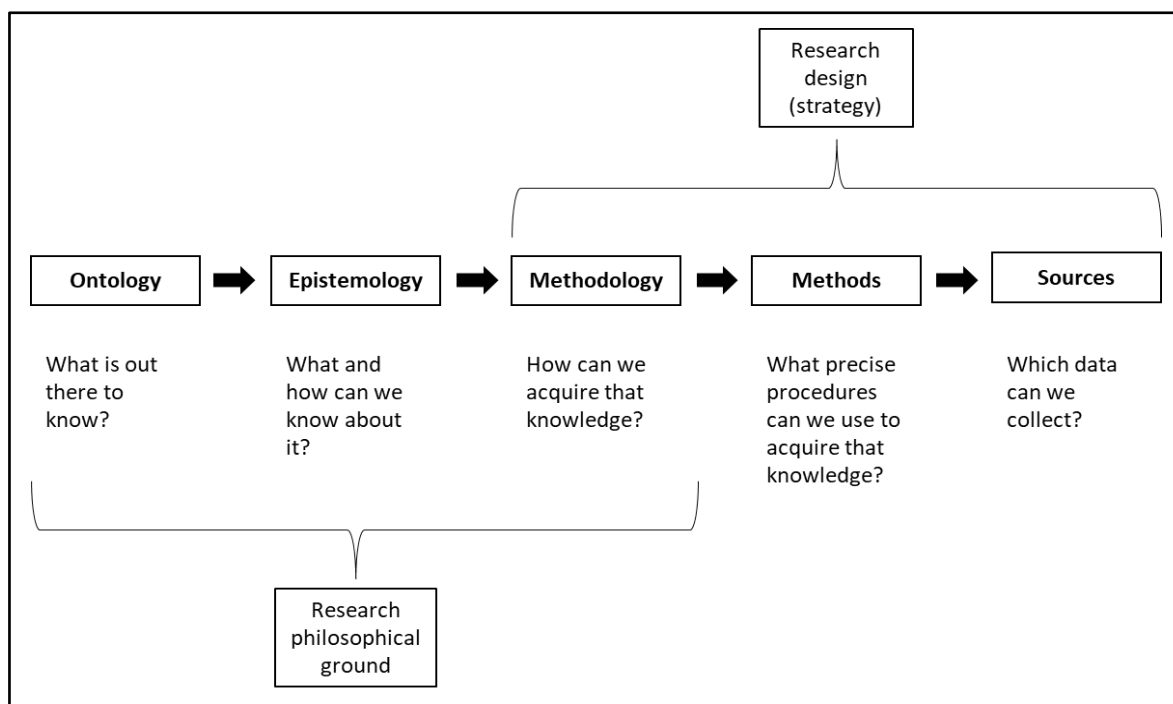


Figure 22: Interrelation between research building blocks, based on Grix (2002, p. 180, figure 1) and Zolfagharian et al. (2019, p. 103788, figure 1)

There are diverse ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies to address social reality. Positivism, pragmatism, and critical realism are the main approaches that underpin research on sustainability transitions (see Geels, 2022; Sorrell, 2018; Zolfagharian et al., 2019). Positivist approaches focus on observable reality that can be measured and predicted by means of using laws. Pragmatist approaches hold a cause-effect perspective to explain causality with a focus on practical action rather than on identifying historical causal mechanisms. In turn, critical realism suggests that reality occurs due to the interaction on three layers including entities, causal mechanisms, and underlying structures (Geels, 2022). Table 15 summarises the main philosophical assumptions of these three approaches.

*Table 15: Main philosophical approaches underpinning research on sustainability transitions, based on Geels (2022), Sorrell (2018), and Zolfagharian et al. (2019)*

	<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Critical realism</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>
<b>Ontology</b>	Reality is independent of researchers and objective (in other words, it can be observed and measured)	Reality is independent and layered (the empirical, the actual, the real).	Reality is actively created and ever changing, as people act to address practical problems.
<b>Epistemology</b>	Discovery of laws and relationships with predictive power generate knowledge. Emphasis on prediction.	<i>Retroduction</i> used to create theories about the entities, structures, and causal mechanisms that combine to generate observable events. Emphasis on explanation.	Knowledge result of previous experiences, problems, and practices based on its usefulness and success. Emphasis on problem-solving.
<b>Methodology</b>	Focus on quantitative methods such as experiments, surveys, and statistical analysis of secondary data.	No preference for a particular method as the choice depends upon the research question, and the nature of the relevant entities and causal mechanism. Reliance on mixed methods.	Focus on practical solutions and outcomes using methods that fit the research the best. Preference for mixed and action research methods.

According to Geels (2022), critical realism is the most suitable philosophical approach to sustainability transitions (see also Papachristos, 2018; Sorrell, 2018; Svensson and Nikoleris, 2018; Zolfagharian et al., 2019). Figure 23 depicts critical realism’s layered reality. Entities have causal powers expressed as mechanisms that, under some condition, can produce events that are experienced empirically (Mingers, 2004; Morton, 2006). From a social science perspective, social structures, and people’s ideas, consciousness, agency, and values are in the real layer because they have a causal power that can result in mechanisms and subsequently in events (Bhaskar, 1997; Sayer, 2010). Causal mechanisms have a constraining and enabling effect on the empirical layer (Bhaskar, 1998). Critical realism as a philosophical ground allows research to focus on the underlying structures that trigger particular events in the empirical layer of social reality (Mingers, 2004).

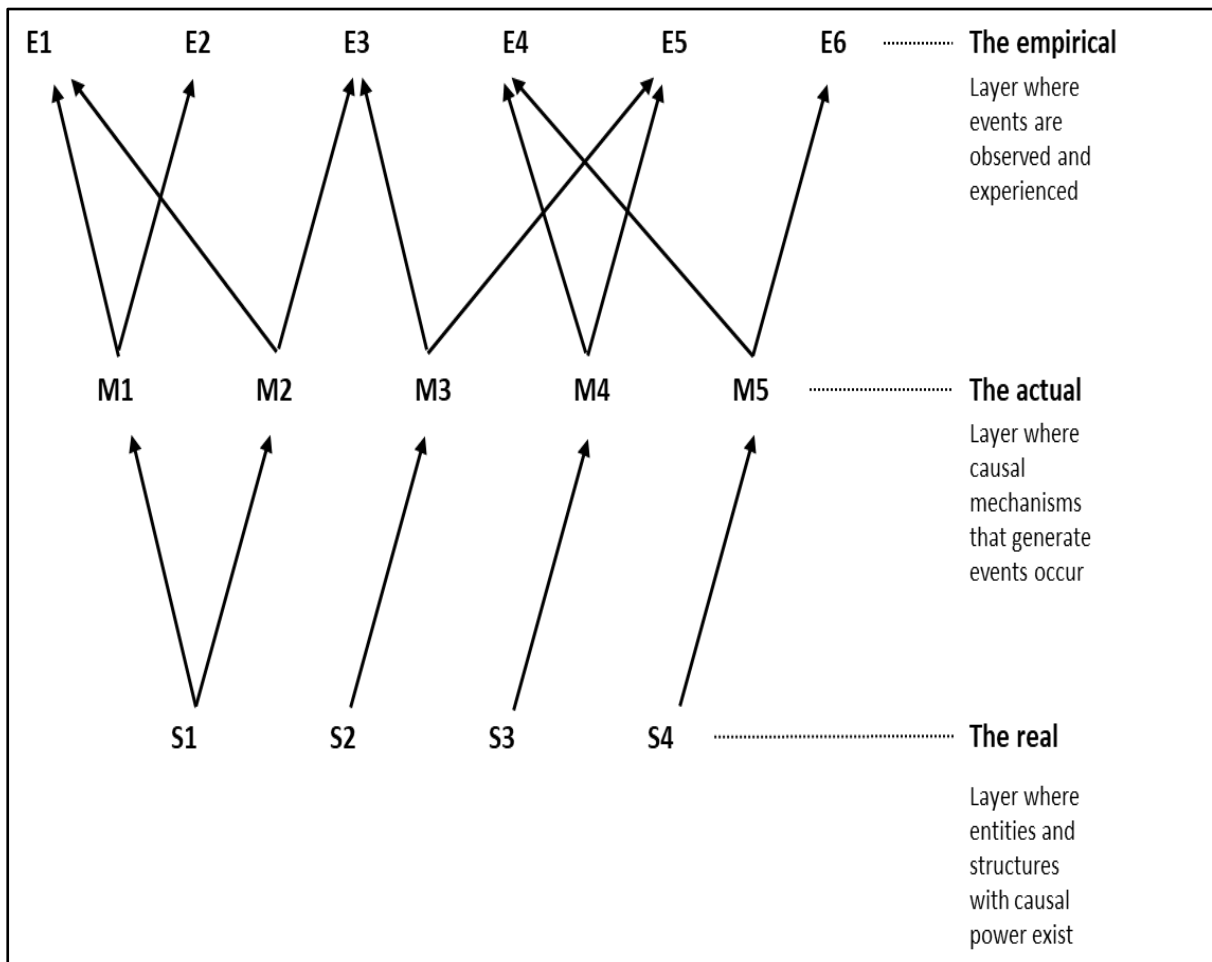


Figure 23: The layered reality of critical realism, adapted from Geels (2022, p. 104537, figure 1)

While critical realism acknowledges that there can be multiple interpretations of social phenomena, it emphasises that not all are valid (Bhaskar, 1998). The best way to generate valid interpretations is through a robust methodology (Shapiro, 2005). Sayer (1999) suggests that the methodology depends on the nature of the object of study and the part of it that the research wants to learn about. Critical realism does not prefer qualitative or quantitative methodologies. Critical realism follows a *retroduction* process to access and acquire knowledge from the actual and real layers (Sorrell, 2018). This consists of abstracting *a posteriori* the causal mechanisms of the object of study and determining the contextual circumstances (Geels, 2022; Yeung, 1997).

Considering that critical realism focuses on causal explanation as a result of the interaction of layers, it is possible to incorporate a complementary theory to strengthen the philosophical grounds of this research: *structuration theory* (Giddens, 1986). This theory places at the core of social reality the relationship between agency and structures which is considered to have a dual direction (Giddens, 1986; Phillips, 2017). In other words, structures steer and constrain human agency via institutional arrangements, rules, routines, resources, and practices while agency has the power to change those structures through their behaviour (Epstein, 2018; Graham, 2005; Turner, 1986). Giddens's structuration theory proposes that empirical phenomena are a product of the operation of structures and agency (Phillips, 2017). This maps well on critical realism as it also claims that social entities can exercise causation on the structures by reproducing or transforming them due to their agency (Bhaskar, 1998). Therefore, as Kaidesoja (2007) argued, social structures do not remain static in space and time, but are relatively temporary and conditioned to a limited geographical region due to the influence of agency. Building on this ground, it is possible to acknowledge the power of agency and structures in a bounded context by means of paying attention to the processes and causal mechanisms driving niche-innovation and regime disruption within a structural landscape (Geels, 2022). The next section focuses on the strategy to acquire the knowledge about those processes and causal mechanisms.

### **5.3. Research strategy: case study**

This research project uses a case study as it represents the appropriate strategy to capture the causal mechanisms generated by social entities and their interactions (Morton, 2006). Sustainability transitions research in sectors such as energy and transport, and EEG-informed research on tourism often uses case studies (see Brouder, 2014a; Zolfagharian, 2019). This section elaborates the research strategy and sets the starting point for the methods of data collection and data analysis in the subsequent sections. Importantly, it is possible to infer from Geels (2022, 2011) that quantitative methodologies – often related to positivist approaches – are not suitable to address the complexity of sustainability transitions as they cannot sufficiently address creative agency, deviations from theoretical laws, and multiple interpretations of phenomena. Hence, considering the nature of this research project, the case study has a qualitative nature.

Case studies are suitable for projects that are bounded to a specific time and activity, and that aim to understand complex social phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2003). through understanding an entire slice of the social world (Schutt, 2011). They are useful when the object of study is difficult to distinguish from the context. For instance, there are some cases where it is problematic to determine the start or end of the phenomenon studied (Yin, 2002). Case studies also allow the research to deal with different kinds of evidence such as documents, interviews, and observations (Yin, 2003). A case study is not a single method, but a path to steer the analysis of a particular setting that has to be addressed holistically as an integrated social unit (Schutt, 2011). As such, it provides a thick description of a phenomenon in the context where and when it takes place (Baxter, 2010; Moses and Knutsen, 2007; Schutt, 2011). In other words, case studies provide an in-depth analysis from the standpoint of the actors about a particular experience in a given context (Geertz, 2008).

Considering the philosophical grounds, the case study needs to be adapted to the nature of the research. Since the research questions aim to uncover the causal mechanisms that underpin sustainability transitions in the MRR, the case study must focus on two important aspects of the tourism sector in the destination. The first

aspect is the historical development of the destination to trace and identify the causal mechanisms (retroduction). Geels (2022, 2011) suggests to address transitions by means of building a narrative based on historical sources as it encompasses the complex interrelations underpinning transitions. The second aspect is to encompass perspectives that reflect the complexity of the object of study. The MRR – as many other tourist destinations – encompasses a large variety of industries, actors, and institutions interacting in a dynamic and complex manner (see, for instance, Sanders, 2006; Thompson, 2015; Wesley and Pforr, 2010). Considering the complexity of the MRR tourism sector, a case study needs to encompass information about the perspectives of all the components of the tourism sector in the destination. Given that no tourist destination exists in isolation, it is necessary to encompass actors outside the destination. In that sense, the case study must consider actors operating at other geographical scales (in the case of Australia, those geographical scales are Western Australia – the state, and Federal – the country).

Research projects aim to understand the case in-depth to capture the causal mechanisms in the given context (Bryman, 2015). This implies that case studies consider the case as the object of study (Bryman, 2015; Mabry, 2008). Gillham (2000, p. 1) defines a case as “a unit of human activity embedded in the real world, which can only be studied or understood in context, which exists in the here and now, that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw”. The case for this research project is the tourism sector in the MRR with particular attention to the changing historical and geographical contexts. In turn, the participants belong to the various groups related to the tourism industry in the MRR such as residents and grassroots organisations, research organisations, government authorities, destination management organisations (DMOs), and tourism firms focused on the different types of tourism presented in Chapter 3.

Case studies can be categorised as theory-verifying, theory-building, and deviant case studies (Moses and Knutsen, 2007). This research project fits into the theory-confirming category because it aims to test the explanatory power of EEG and the MLP (theories) in the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR. Indeed, case studies are useful to verifying existing theories that involve complex phenomena (Baxter, 2010; Moses and Knutsen, 2007). Figure 24 graphically outlines the

application of theories (the MLP and EEG) to the evolution of tourism in the Margaret River region. In that sense, both theoretical frameworks are used simultaneously to address the historical changes of the tourism as a sociotechnical system due to the interaction of niches, regimes, and landscape. On the one hand, the MLP is used to address historical and sustainability transitions in the destination whereas, on the other hand, path-dependence and path-creation are used to analyse the regime's reluctance to change and the emergence and development of niches, respectively. An important element in the figure below is the differentiation between historical and sustainability transitions. Considering that participants cannot provide definitive information about the ancient history of the destination, this research relies on additional sources to address that part of the historical evolution of the destination including primary and secondary documents (see section 5.4.2).

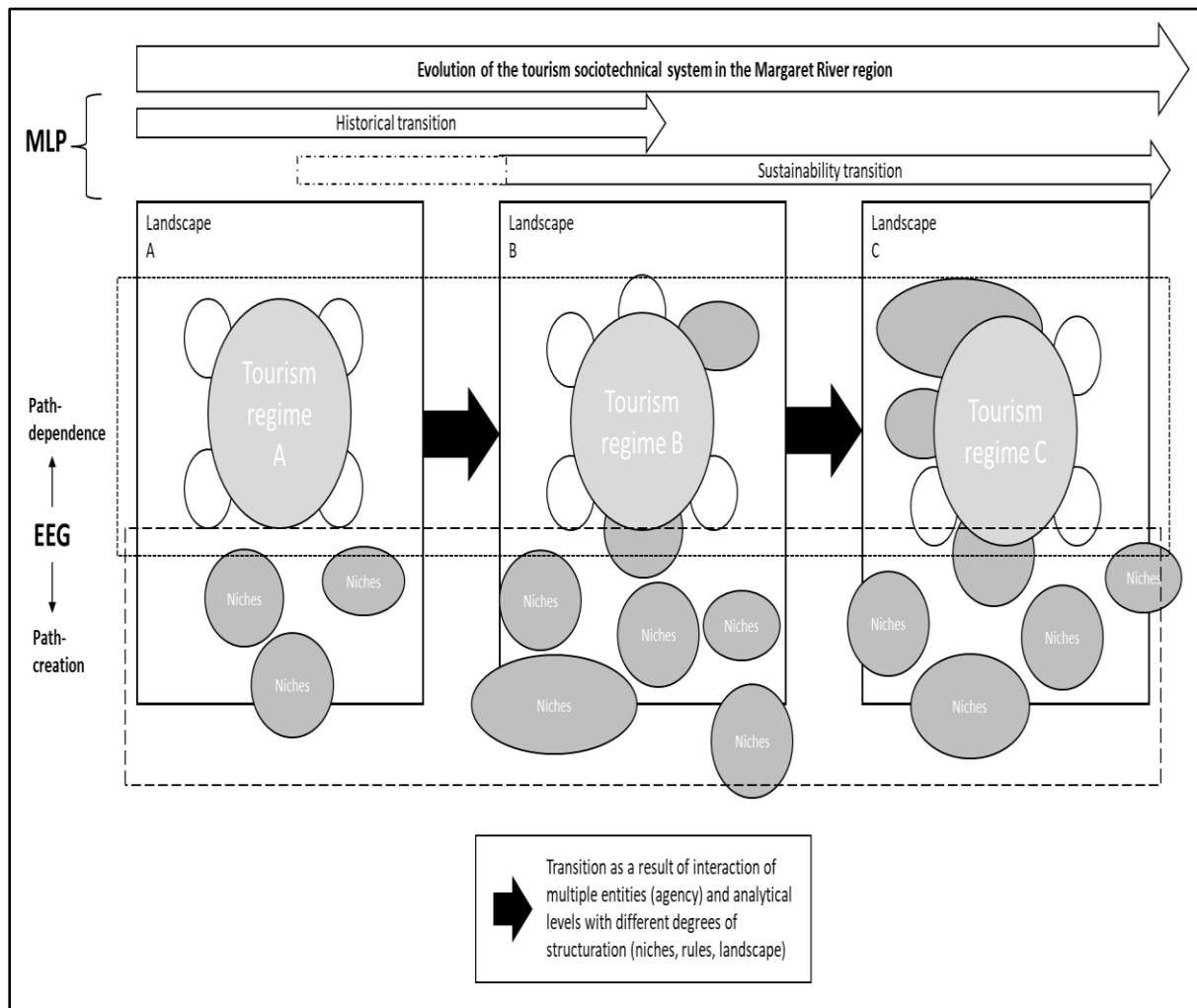


Figure 24: The overall research strategy

One of the main caveats of case studies is that they often cannot provide the basis for a valid generalisation and could be non-representative (Lijphart, 1971; Sayer, 1999). While generalisation is possible (see for instance Bryman, 2015; Mjøset, 2009), a case study, such as the one in this thesis, does not have the power to attempt any generalisation. In fact, as mentioned previously, this thesis aims to verify the applicability of a particular theoretical framework. Nonetheless, if the case study uncovers a particular causal mechanism embedded in a given actor or group of actors, it is possible to generalise their causal power in other contexts as it is inherent to the actor or group of actors (Sayer, 1999). Yet, it would require further verification. Another criticism of qualitative case studies – and often to any type of qualitative approach – is that of methodological rigour (see Bryman, 2015; Liamputtong, 2019). A useful methodological resource, used in this thesis and addressed in the next section, is triangulation (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Valentine, 2005).

In sum, the research strategy for this thesis is a qualitative case study that addresses the historical development of the tourism sector (as a sociotechnical system) in the Margaret River region. The aim of this case study is to verify the applicability of the MLP and EEG (path-dependence and path-creation) in this particular case. Considering the nature and aim of the case study as well as the research questions, the research design encompassed two methods of information collection, namely semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis.

#### **5.4. Methods of information collection**

Prior to addressing information collection methods, it is necessary to differentiate between methodology and methods as they are often taken interchangeably. While the former guides and frames the research, the latter corresponds to the techniques used to gather information or data adequately (Moses and Knutsen, 2007). Methods must be adequate to the nature and the purpose of the research (Sayer, 2010). Since the case study consists of obtaining in-depth information about the evolution of the tourism sector in the MRR, interviews are a suitable method for obtaining information about complex phenomena including opinions, feelings, emotions, and experiences (Denscombe, 2010). However, as argued by Creswell (2014), qualitative case studies benefit from using multiple methods including observations,



and documentary and audio-visual analysis. Hence, the research incorporated documentary analysis as an additional method to gather contextual and historical information. This method involved the analysis of data gathered and deposited in archives by other researchers (Seale, 2010). The use of two methods also contributed to credibility and methodological rigour (Liamputtong, 2019). This methodological strategy is referred to as triangulation.

Triangulation of methods is a way to improve research trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Triangulation is described as the search for “convergence and corroboration of results from different methods and designs studying the same phenomenon” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 22). In that sense, it is highly recommendable that any research strategy considers triangulation between two or more methods (Decrop, 1999; Liamputtong, 2019; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In the same vein, Valentine (2005) argues that interviews should not be used in isolation but in combination with other methods to efficiently address the research questions. Decrop (1999) lists four types of triangulations: data triangulation (the use of different data sources), method triangulation (the use of multiple methods to gather data), investigator triangulation (the participation of various researchers), and theoretical triangulation (the use of more than one discipline or theoretical perspectives). This thesis utilises three categories (investigator triangulation was not used as the thesis and data analysis were done only by the author):

- Data triangulation: while the research project mainly relies on data from interviewees, it also utilises data from secondary sources such as newspaper articles, magazines, and tourism-related websites (see subsection 5.5),
- Method triangulation: the research project uses two methods of data collection (interviews and documentary analysis) in a complementary manner (see subsections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2),
- Theoretical triangulation: as discussed in Chapter 4, this thesis builds upon two theoretical complementary approaches (MLP and EEG).

Hence, the following two subsections elaborate method triangulation by means of discussing the two methods of data collection (interviews and documentary analysis). Nonetheless, before addressing them it is important to remark that this thesis was affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the author was unable to travel to the area of study and had to rely on online tools for interviews and an extensive documentary analysis that was done before the interview stage. This did not change the fact that the interviews remained the core method of this thesis.

#### 5.4.1. Interviews

Interviews are dialogues where one of the parts (often the researcher) defines the route of the conversation to obtain the knowledge that emerges from their interaction (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Yet, interviews are not mere conversations as they require planning, preparation, and sensitivity from the interviewer to cope with the complex nature of interactions that interviews entail (Denscombe, 2010). As such, interviews demand the interviewer to develop a sufficient knowledge about the phenomenon in question to formulate adequate questions and approach diplomatically the interviewee during the interview (Dunn, 2010; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Schutt (2011) defines interviews as a method to learn about a phenomena experienced by people in-depth, on their own terms, and in the context of their situation. Interviews are a useful method because they provide a large variety of similar or contested opinions about the same phenomena, fill gaps of information that other methods cannot as they allow the participants to reflect on their own experience in relation to the perceived phenomena, and allow access to privileged data from participants that might have key insights about the studied phenomena (Denscombe, 2010; Dunn, 2010).

A useful guide to plan interviews for research purposes is Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) seven stages for interview investigation. These steps are thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting. This subsection addresses the early three stages as the remaining ones are discussed in section 5.5. Therefore, this subsection focuses on the stages related to all the required decisions and preparation prior to embark on the interviews *per se*.

Thematising refers to the selection of concepts, theoretical frameworks, and activities to familiarise with the research objectives and the area of study. As such, the thematising stage provides the theoretical foundation and knowledge prior to explore the object of study, defines the main topics about the object of study, and contributes to carry out a successful interview (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Clearly, the thematising stage began before the selection of methods in the form of gathering, discussing, and reporting the pertinent literature review (Chapters 2-4). The stage also included exploration of the tourism sector at the destination, similar destinations, and at the national level (Australia). This exploration was possible by means of using tourism marketing websites, maps, pictures, videos, and informal conversations with Australian citizens that had visited the MRR. A useful support during this stage was the documentary analysis done prior to the interviews.

The following stage, the designing stage, consists of the prior selection of the precise conditions that frame the interview *per se*. As such, this stage includes the selection of the adequate type of interview, the formulation of suitable interview questions, the selection of the potential interviewees, the size of the sample, the acquisition of required resources to carry out the interviews (software, digital recorder), the approximate duration of the interviews, and planning the time and place for the interviews (despite being online) (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

According to the extant literature review, interviews can be of three types based on their degree of structure (see for instance Bryman, 2015; Denscombe, 2010; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This typology includes unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews. This research selected semi-structured interviews as they help gather further information compared to the other types, invite the participants to deeply develop their opinions and perspectives, and give the opportunity to emphasise a particular emerging topic (Denscombe, 2010; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Despite not being strictly structured, semi-structured interviews require the interviewer to consolidate an interview guide (see appendix 1). This guide should provide the main topics to discuss, the aspects that must be addressed, and the questions that could prove useful during the interview (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Bryman (2015) indicates that the contents of the interview guide should contribute to linking the interview questions with the research questions

Once the type of interview was selected, and potential participants identified, it was important to carry out an adequate sampling of participants that encompassed different settings, people, events, or artefacts, even if it was not representative (Schutt, 2011). Based on Patton's (1990) types of sampling which provide a framework for addressing suitable participants, this research chose two types of sampling: criterion and snowball. Criterion sampling consists of selecting participants that meet certain criteria according to the research. As such, the selected criteria were to approach potential participants involved in the tourism sector in the MRR, including tourism firms, tourism organisations, tourism authorities, and DMOs. The criteria also included those actors indirectly related to tourism such as members of grassroots organisations involved in sustainable tourism initiatives, residents' associations working to preserve tourism resources, and businesses or organisations that provide supportive services to tourism firms. An additional criterion was to mainly include actors at the destination level but also those operating at the State and Federal levels with a direct influence on the destination. Considering the complexity of the tourism sector and sustainability transitions (see Chapters 3 and 4), the research targeted the following groups of potential participants:

- Private tourism firms operating in different types of tourism mainly in wine-tourism, nature-based tourism, and sun and surf-tourism at the destination. Private firms included those offering tour services, accommodation, and outdoor excursions.
- Non-for-profit organisations supported or related with local and State authorities and/or residents. These organisations can operate at the destination or outside the destination working as a bridge between international or federal actors and local actors.
- Public authorities that regulate and lead the tourism sector at the destination, State, and Federal level. This group also includes public bodies that bring support to the tourism sector such as water, energy, and transport management organisations.
- Destination management offices that oversee the marketing of the destination to internal and international markets. These DMOs must be

related to the destination but not necessarily oversee only the destination. As such, the DMOs can operate at the destination and subregional levels.

- Independent researchers that gather and analyse information about the tourism sector at the destination. These researchers are often related to local or State universities.
- Residents' associations and grassroots organisations that operate at the destination level advocating for practices and policies related to sustainability and sustainable tourism.

At the end of interviews, interviewees were asked to recommend other participants. This type of sampling is referred to as snowball sampling. This was very useful when the acceptance rate of criterion sampling began to slow down. While qualitative case studies are not overly concerned about sample size, more participants provide greater diversity and depth of analysis (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010; Schutt, 2011).

As mentioned in the previous section, this research was disrupted by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Understandably, the research design adapted to this constraining condition. All the interviews were planned to be online using videoconference platforms that allowed live communication and simultaneous recording. To prevent any unexpected loss of data during the interviews, the researcher used a digital recorder during the interviews and tested suitable videoconference platforms. An important element to consider for online interviews was their duration. Online interviews were planned to take on average 30 to 35 minutes. To close the design stage, the researcher selected an adequate space at his place of residence to carry out the online interviews making sure potential external disruption would be minimised.

The third stage of the interviewing process is conducting the interviews. Having completed all the planning and preparation, the researcher began contacting potential interviewees mainly using e-mails, Facebook messages, LinkedIn messages, and websites contact forms. The researcher contacted 144 potential participants, out of which 31 declined, 62 did not reply, and 51 accepted. To facilitate the engagement with the project, the researcher offered the participants to decide the best time and videoconference platform for them despite the time difference (for

instance, Western Australia and Scotland have seven to nine hours of difference depending on the time of the year).

In general, the interviews had a good flow of ideas, the participants appeared engaged with topic and were always prompted to recommend potential participants. An important aid during this stage was the researcher's supervisor at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia) who linked the researcher with potential participants in the research community and in grassroots organisations as well. To facilitate the flow of the communication, the researcher asked the participants to introduce themselves and elaborate on their connection with the topic. It is important to mention that all participants had previously received a participant information sheet and a consent form with details about the interview process and the research topic. Both documents are addressed in section 5.6. The only caveat presented to participants during the interview process was the fact that the researcher had never been to the destination. For a number of participants, that fact triggered some concerns about the researcher's knowledge about the area of study. Fortunately, due to previous planning and extensive preparation including meetings with other researchers who knew the region, the researcher was able to sort out any concern or additional questions from those participants.

This thesis carried out 49 interviews with 52 interviewees (three interviews had two participants in each). Additionally, two participants decided to participate in written form. In those two cases, the participants received a set of questions with a brief introduction encouraging them to add information that they considered valuable for the research topic and was not addressed by the questions. In sum, the research consisted of 51 interviews – oral and written – with a total of 54 participants (see Table 16). Although not planned, the participants were 50 % male and 50 % female according to their chosen pronouns. Even though the researcher contacted representatives of Indigenous tourism firms, no interviews were arranged. By the end of the interview stage, case saturation had been reached (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010; Schutt, 2011). Since the interviews were semi-structured, new questions and insightful discussions took place which extended the expected average interview duration. The average duration of the interviews was 48.65 minutes with a maximum

duration of 78 minutes (Interviewee 31) and a minimum duration of 25 minutes (Interviewees 19 and 26).

*Table 16: Type and distribution of participants interviewed.*

<b>Type of participant</b>	<b>Sub-type (if necessary)</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Private tourism firms	Wine-tourism related	5
	Nature-based tourism related	3
	Sun and surf-tourism related	2
	Other tourism-related firms (breweries, distilleries, spas, resorts, art, booking system providers, chamber of commerce)	9
Non-for-profit organisations	Destination level	4
	Federal level	1
Public authorities	Local	2
	State (WA)	8
	Federal	3
Destination management organisations (DMOs)	Local	1
	Subregional	1
Independent researchers	Not applicable	6
Grassroots organisations and residents' associations	Not applicable	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>54</b>

#### 5.4.2. Documentary analysis

Since the research project was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the documentary analysis took place before interviews were conducted. This provided rich historical and contextual information. Considering that interviews should be combined with other methods to improve the methodological rigour (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Liamputtong, 2019; Valentine, 2005), this research project considered documentary analysis as the most suitable complementary method to address the sustainability transition in the MRR. This method was central to establishing the historical development of the tourism sector in the destination.

Denscombe (2010) describes documentary analysis as a kind of social inquiry that uses documents as its primary source of information. Documentary analysis allows

access to important contextual events and processes mainly because the documents are *situated products* (Prior, 2003; Seale, 2010). It means that the documents were produced under the historical and geographical conditions of their time (Prior, 2003). However, the researcher depended on the quality and veracity of the information which was not necessarily produced for the same purposes as those of the researcher's (Clark, 2005; Denscombe, 2010). In this regard, Dawson (2002) suggests that researchers must filter the documents used as sources carefully.

Documentary analysis targets documents of different nature such as written texts, digital communication, and visual sources that can be obtained from public or private organisations (Bryman, 2015; Denscombe, 2010). Important features to consider when doing documentary analysis are the authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning of the documents selected (Scott, 1990). In that sense, it is necessary to assess the reputation of the sources used to obtain the documents (Clark, 2005; Scott, 1990). Documents gathered from official sources tend to be of high quality (for instance, census data, planning records, and statistics from public organisations ) as well as those from private organisations that produce documents for commercial purposes (Clark, 2005). Nonetheless, it is important to consider that, in some cases, access to documents requires payment or negotiation with the document owner (Clark, 2005; Denscombe, 2010).

To carry out the documentary analysis for this thesis, the researcher had an interview with a representative of Curtin University Library who provided advice about reliable, authentic, and credible sources for the tourism sector in the MRR. Based on that information, the researcher used three main databases: Factiva, ProQuest, and Trove. Factiva and ProQuest are databases that contain newspaper and magazine articles about different topics from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until this decade. In turn, Trove (the search engine of the National Museum of Australia) was a fundamental tool to obtain historical archives from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was relevant to identify the early years of the tourism sector in the MRR considering that the first settlements in the region date from 1834 (Cresswell, 2003).

Using three primary keywords and phrases (tourism, sustainable tourism, and Margaret River region), the researcher compiled 798 entries that dated back to the



late 1840s when early reports about the destination's caves (an iconic tourism attraction in the MRR) first appeared in local newspapers (see Perth Gazette, 1848). All the entries were organised in an Excel spreadsheet and summarised. This archive allowed the researcher to develop a sophisticated understanding of the destination's evolution as well as the multiple actors involved. The documentary analysis assisted identification of historical transitions at the destination and understanding of changing historical and contemporary contexts.

### **5.5. Analysis of the research findings**

According to the philosophical grounds and the research design of this thesis, the researcher followed a retroduction approach supported by the content analysis and coding to identify the causal mechanisms and elements with causal power that underpinned the historical and sustainability transitions in the MRR. Retroduction refers to the analysis of a phenomenon from the empirical layer to deeper layers (real and actual) in order to identify the factors that produce and/or condition the studied phenomenon (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017; Bhaskar, 1998; Sæther, 1998). To address such phenomenon in the empirical layer, the researcher must make use of pre-existing theories (for instance the theoretical framework) (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017; Fleetwood and Ackroyd, 2004). As such, retroduction implies an analytical movement (see Figure 25). Belfrage and Hauf (2017, p. 255) indicate that a retroductive analysis "moves back and forth between observable phenomena and possible explanations in an endeavour to gain deeper knowledge of complex reality". To operationalise this analytical movement, it is necessary to find the meaning in the empirical data. In other words, it is necessary to identify the content related to the studied phenomenon in the empirical layer experienced by the case participants. A useful technique is Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis method (see Miles et al., 2013) that makes use of codes and memos to harness the meanings related to the studied phenomenon in order to draw conclusions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Saldana, 2009).

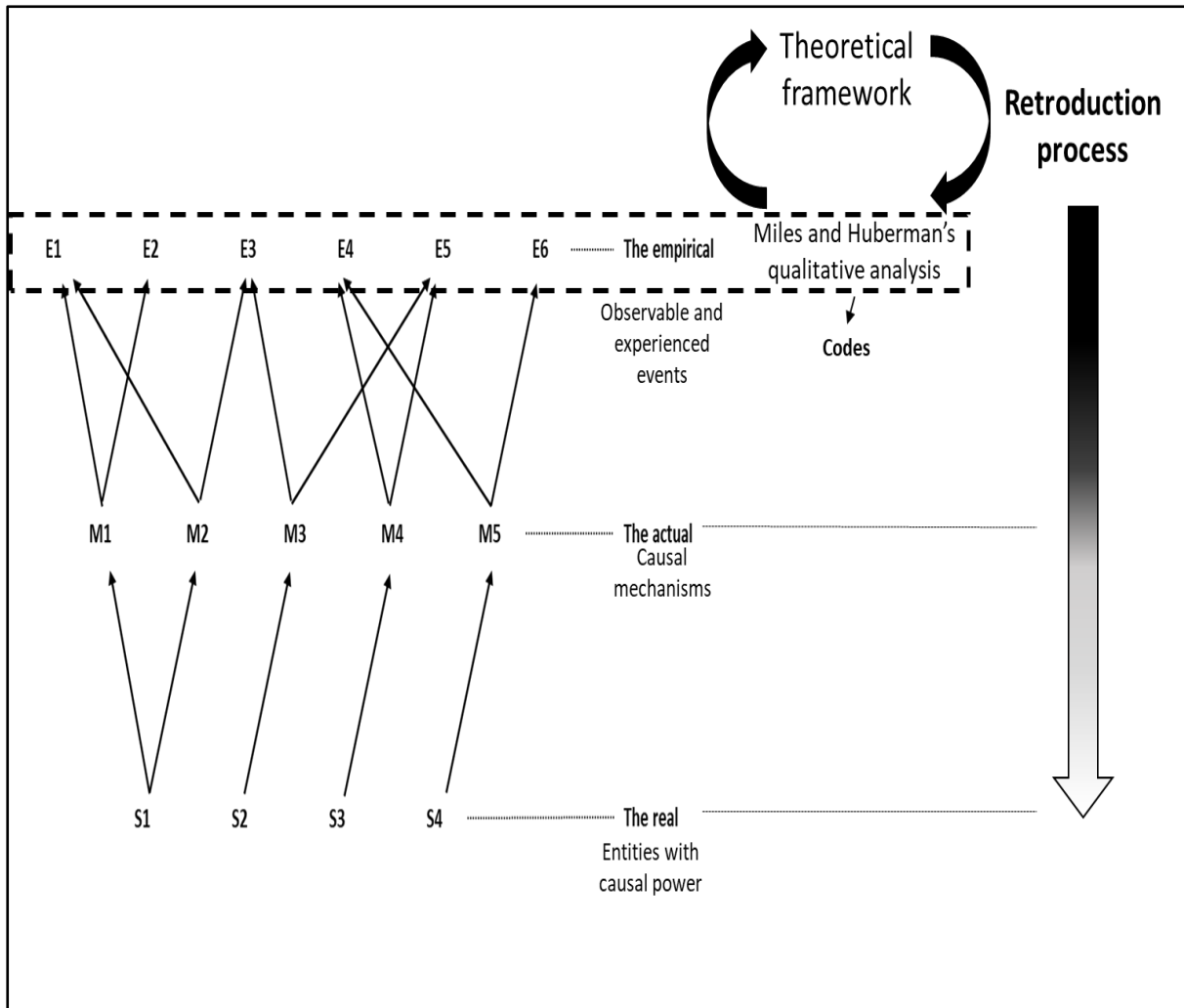


Figure 25: Graphic explanation of the data analysis for this research, based on Geels (2022, p. 104537, figure 1)

Researchers carry out data analysis seeking underlying meaning from which it is possible to construct themes, relations between variables or entities, and patterns (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Punch, 2005). By means of using a Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis method it is possible to detect that underlying meaning (Miles et al., 2013; Punch, 2005). Miles and Huberman's method, used to analyse the interviewees transcriptions, involves the establishment of *codes* and *memos* to organise the data collected (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Punch, 2005). In qualitative research, a code is "(...) a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). The action of putting labels or codes against pieces of qualitative data is coding (Punch, 2005). The researcher can decide to construct codes in advance (pre-established codes) or to determine them *a posteriori* (emerging codes) or to do both (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Punch, 2005;

Saldana, 2009). In turn, the memos refer to the recorded ideas that emerge during the coding process. The memos link the qualitative information with the concepts and theoretical frameworks and contribute to drawing arguments or conclusions (Punch, 2005).

Bearing in mind the retroduction approach and Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis method, the researcher addressed the gathered data following the three interviewing research stages that were not previously addressed such as transcribing, analysing, and verifying (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). As such, the interviews were transcribed into Word documents, with the help of transcription foot pedal. Considering that all the interviews were in English there was no need to undergo any translation. However, the researcher had to double-check colloquial Australian expressions with the help of Australian colleagues.

The analysis stage was carried out using Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis method which comprises four operations: coding, memoing, drawing conclusions, and verification (or data triangulation) (see appendix 2) (Miles et al., 2013; Punch, 2005). As mentioned, the coding process encompassed pre-established and emerging codes (see Table 17). This is common in research projects using qualitative analysis methods such as Miles and Huberman's (Punch, 2005). Based on the analysis method, the pre-established codes derived from conceptual and theoretical frameworks, research questions, and the hypotheses that researcher had formulated before the data gathering process (see Miles et al., 2013). As noted in Table 17, most of the pre-established codes were created to provide key qualitative data to answer the five research questions based on the large literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) and the theoretical frameworks (Chapter 4). As the analysis progressed, the researcher noticed important patterns that could not be coded using the pre-established codes which derived into the emergence of new codes (emerging codes). The coding and memoing process occurred concurrently which helped to maintain a constant retroduction between the meaning in the qualitative and the theoretical and conceptual framework. This analysis took various iterations.

Table 17: Pre-established and emerging codes used in analysis of interviews.

Research questions	Pre-established codes	Emerging codes
How do the challenges to the tourism industry in the MRR and the emerging responses to them influence the sustainability of the destination?	Drivers of tourism, sustainability stances, sustainability challenges, climate change, sustainability initiatives	Elite tourism, Aboriginal people's level of engagement, seasonality, accessibility
How advanced is the MRR's transition to more sustainable forms of tourism as a result of the sustainability-related initiatives taking place at the destination?	Tourism stakeholders, COVID-19 pandemic, green niches, rules, relationship between authorities and firms, relationship between firms and residents	Grassroot organisations, tourism boom, relationship between residents and authorities
What are the path-dependent factors and how do they influence the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR?	Historical triggering events, destination image, frontier ethos, economic growth, natural resource- and heritage-based factors, sustainability ethos, visitors' environmental awareness, innovation drivers, intermediary actors, windows of opportunity	Labour force, luxury tourism, tourism area life cycle, intermediary actors, external firms, local culture, destination branding, skilled external labour
What are the path-shaping factors and how do they influence the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR?		
What is the transformative potential of the COVID-19 pandemic to foster sustainability transitions in the MRR?	COVID-19 impact, recovery strategies post COVID-19, expected time for recovery	COVID-19 impact on residents

To facilitate the coding process (assign codes to relevant sections of the transcriptions) of the 51 interview transcripts, the researcher used interview analysis software NVivo (version 12). The software allowed the researcher to analyse the qualitative data from different participants about a particular topic (represented by a code). The qualitative analysis led to conclusions. Miles et al. (2013) proposes 13 tactics for drawing conclusions which do not need to be used entirely. The researcher used six of these tactics: noting patterns, clustering, counting (in some

cases), making contrasts, noting the relations between variables, making theoretical coherence. Once conclusions for each code were reached, Miles et al. (2013) recommends testing the conclusions with other sources which Decrop (1999) refers to as data triangulation (see section 5.4). As such, the conclusions from each code were verified against the contextual and historical data from the documentary analysis including data from newspapers, magazines, institutional reports, and websites. Data triangulation contributed to confirm the research key findings. These findings were contrasted with EEG and the MLP in tourism and other sectors following a retroduction process. The latter is directly related to theoretical triangulation (see section 5.4).

Here, a step-by-step example would result more useful. The following example refers to the code *historical triggering events*:

1. Sections from interview transcripts addressing key historical events that have shaped the status of the destination were placed under the code *historical triggering events* using NVivo,
2. The code *historical triggering events* was read several times to familiarise with the content and to identify patterns, clusters, and relations within the code,
3. Four key clusters were identified (cave-related, wine-related, timber-related, and surf-related) as well as relations between them,
4. Building on those clusters and relations, conclusions were reached (for example, surf- and wine-related events unfolded in a similar timeline),
5. Conclusions of the code *historical triggering events* were triangulated and verified against contextual data derived from the documentary analysis (for example, conclusions about wine and tourism in the destination were tested against newspaper articles about the relevance of the wine industry in the destination),
6. Verified findings within the code *historical triggering events* were contrasted against the MLP to identify the regime, landscape, and niche actors as well as their interactions, and against EEG to identify path-dependent and path-shaping factors.

7. The final products of the analysis for the code *historical triggering events* were reported in Chapters 6 and 8 making use of relevant direct quotes, when necessary, and contextual data from the documentary analysis.

Finally, to summarise sections 5.3 to 5.5, Figure 26 presents a timeline of the research project process.

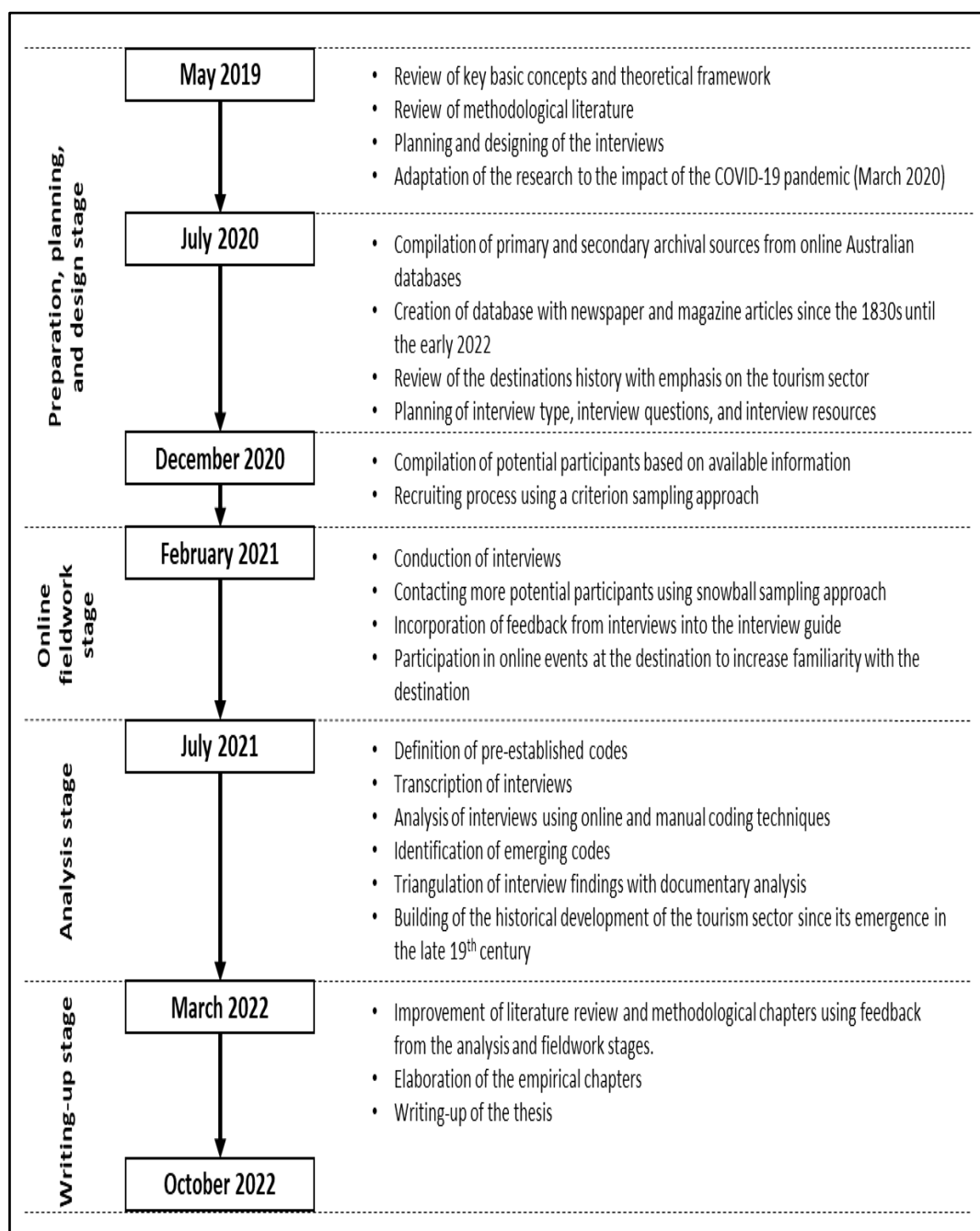


Figure 26: Timeline of the research project process

## 5.6. Ethics, power, and positionality

This section focuses on three main elements that are necessary to conduct responsible and ethically-sound research. Those elements are ethics, power, and positionality. Ethics must be present during all stages of research to produce an honest piece of research with valid results that protects the participants involved (Dowling, 2010; Schutt, 2011). The importance of ethics in social research lies in recognising that research involves people who deserve respect, and, therefore, researchers are not in a privileged position to pursue their interest at the expense of the participants (Denscombe, 2010; Schutt, 2011). As such, there are key ethics principles that any research must consider, including not harming participants, acquiring informed consent from participants, allowing participants to be anonymised, treating sensible information with the utmost confidentiality, avoiding invading the privacy of participants, and complying with all existing policies in the place where the research takes place (Bryman, 2015; Denscombe, 2010; Schutt, 2011). To assure the compliance of these ethics principles, research must obtain the approval from an Ethics Committee as they ensure that the research is correctly designed and no participants, researcher, and institutions/organisations are harmed or affected (Bryman, 2015; Denscombe, 2010). In that sense, this research project obtained ethics approval from the relevant Ethics Boards at both the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, and Curtin University in Western Australia. This approval validated that this research project considered all ethical implications during all phases.

As part of the requirements of the Ethics Board, the researcher had to produce *inter alia* two important documents. These documents are the participant information sheet and consent form (see appendices 3 and 4). Both documents were sent to every potential participant during the recruitment phase of the project, regardless of the sampling type. The participant information sheet carefully and didactically explained the project to the potential participants. This document introduced the name, affiliation, contact details, and supervisors' details of the researcher and the aims of the research. In addition to that information, the document provided key information to the potential participants in order to obtain their informed consent in event they agreed to participate. The key information encompassed a brief

justification for the invitation to participate, the details of the interview process, the risks that the research involved, and the management of the participants' data including storage, confidentiality, and anonymity. The information participation sheet clearly made the potential participants aware about their rights such as withdrawing from the interview at any point, requesting for their information to be removed from the research at any, asking any doubt they could have about the research, and having all potential identifiable personal information anonymised. The potential participants that kindly agreed to participate in the research project as interviewees after reading the participant information sheet had to read, complete, and send the consent form back to the researcher. The consent form briefly and clearly presented key details about the project to the participants as well as their rights – previously indicated in the participant information sheet.

In order to maintain an adequate ethical behaviour, the researcher handled the data carefully. This means that after each interview, the researcher uploaded the video or audio recordings together with the interview transcripts to a secure drive owned and managed by the University of Aberdeen. According to the data management policies at the University of Aberdeen, all data gathered from the interviewees is going to be stored up to five years after the end of the research. Another important ethical aspect is all participants' personal data in the interview transcripts such as names and specific affiliations has been stored in an anonymised format. The name of the interviewees has been replaced by numbers assigned by the researcher who is the only person that keeps that information in a secured drive.

Power in social research manifests in the relations between researcher and participants which the former must acknowledge to be able to conduct adequate engagements such as interviews (Dowling, 2010). Power exists in every social relationship which makes it impossible to overlook during any social research (Dowling, 2010; Merriam et al., 2001). For instance, typical manifestations of power in social research include researchers taking opposite sides from the participants about a topic, funding bodies or people in power trying to influence research due to vested interests in the research, participants being wary of allowing access to particular aspects of the studied phenomenon, or external bodies attempting to restrict the results of the research (Bryman, 2015). Valentine (2005) points out that in



interviews it is the interviewer who holds a *dominant position*. Nevertheless, there are cases where the dominant position belongs to the interviewee (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002). Often such cases involve participants that are elites or business people who could exercise power by controlling the access to information, knowledge, and informants (Valentine, 2005). In the case of this research project, the researcher has been fully aware of the power relations and, therefore, has been polite and diplomatic with the participants. A useful strategy was to honestly inform the participants about the potential benefits that the research could provide to the tourism sector and the overall destination. This strategy helped the researcher to access information from the participants with no problem and, even more, received recommendations and invitations to visit the MRR in the near future.

In turn, positionality requires that the potential implications of the researcher's and participants' identity (for instance, race, gender, and nationality) on the research are identified and accounted for (Dowling, 2010; Merriam et al., 2001). Positionality relies "on the assumption that a culture is more than a monolithic entity to which one belongs or not" (Merriam et al., 2001 p. 411). Positionality is subjective because it entails the researchers' personal opinion about the research and participants, and intersubjective because it consists of an interaction of two or more actors with their own identity (Dowling, 2010). In that sense, positionality depends on where the researcher stands in relation to the participants in terms of education, gender, sexual orientation, social class, and race (Merriam et al., 2001). For instance, in some cases sharing the same identity or background with the participants could have a positive impact on the rapport resulting in a rich and full of details interview (Valentine, 2005). In the case of this research, issues of gender and race were not perceived. The only factor that came up during all interaction between researcher and participants was that of nationality as the researcher's accent was not easy to identify. To avoid any potential negative influence from this issue, the researcher introduced himself as "a Peruvian person doing research in Scotland about Western Australia". This particular phrase eased the interview and allowed a fluid dialogue.

### 5.7. Area of study: the Margaret River region

The MRR encompasses two local government areas: The City of Busselton (henceforth Busselton) and the Shire of Augusta – Margaret River (henceforth AMR). The MRR is in the Southwest region of the State of Western Australia state (see Figure 27). It is important to differentiate between the MRR and the Southwest region. The latter encompasses the MRR and other destinations such as Bunbury and the Great Southern – in the north and south of the MRR respectively. The MRR is also known as Cape to Cape region, Leeuwin – Naturaliste region, or, in colloquial terms, the *Down south* (Sanders, 2006). The region is delimited in the north, south, and west by coastal boundaries, and in the east by the foothills of the Darling Plateau (Sanders, 2006; Thompson, 2015), and presents a Mediterranean type climate with a warm to hot and often dry summer, and mild wet winters (Jones et al., 2010; Tyler and Doughty, 2013). Aside some exceptions, extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, heat wave conditions, or tropical cyclones have been rare in the region. These weather conditions, high quality wines, and the fact that the region is one of the top 25 global biodiversity hotspots (Myers et al., 2000), have contributed to the national and international recognition of the region as an attractive place for tourism and leisure (Jones et al., 2019, 2010). The area accounts for scenic coastal plains, large jarrah-marri (*Eucalyptus marginata* and *Corymbia calophylla* respectively) and karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*) forests, and geological formations along the western coast (Sanders, 2006). According to the last available census, Busselton and the AMR accommodated 50,875 residents (ABS, 2016).

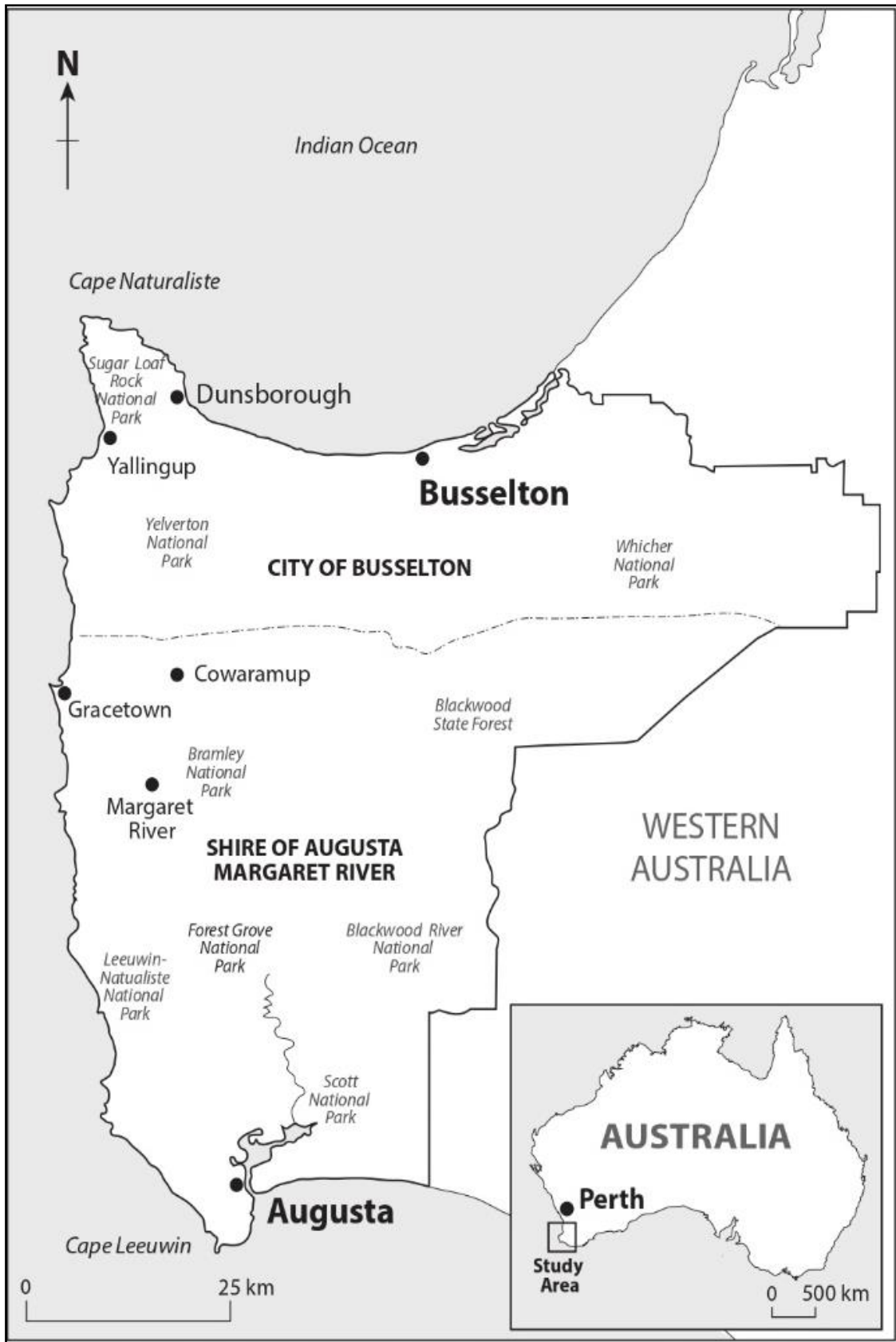


Figure 27: Location of the Margaret River region in Western Australia

The traditional custodians of the South West region are the Noongar people – the language group whose country includes the MRR are the Wardandi (see Figure 28) (Tindale, 1940). The Wardandi Noongar people used the terms Yoonderup and Wooditchup to refer to the MRR (Bracknell, 2014; Collard et al., 1994; White, 2017). Indeed, the region has a strong Indigenous presence from approximately 50,000 years ago (Dortch, 1979, 1997; Jupp, 2001; Sanders, 2006; White, 2017). Sanders (2006) suggests that, since Aboriginal people used to move across the territory, they were the first travellers or tourists in the region, although it is impossible to reach a conclusion in this regard. Before the colonisation process in the region, which started in 1829, the Wardandi people managed the landscape using fire to facilitate hunting in the shrublands and woodland (Balme, 2014; Dortch, 2002; Sanders, 2006). However, the settler colonisation process, that started in the MRR in 1834, appears as an external shock that imposed a new development path for the region. This new path was mainly based on a frontier ethos (an anthropocentric view of the territory as a source of unlimited resources), new economic activities such as timber and agriculture, new actors also known as settler colonisers, and a large process of dispossession against the Noongar people in the entire South West region (Cox and Birdsall-Jones, 2019; Haebich, 2000, 1992). Since then, the MRR has experienced waves of changes due to external and internal factors such as world wars, political changes at the state and federal levels, and migration from regional to urban areas (Jones et al., 2019; Sanders, 2000; Thompson, 2015).



Figure 28: Noongar language groups in the Southwest region, Tindale (1940, online)

Currently, the region has a thriving tourism industry focusing on wine, surfing, gastronomy, and various environmental and cultural amenities (Jones et al., 2019). Indeed, the MRR as a tourist destination overlaps – almost entirely – with the Margaret River wine region. The wine region is the area to the west of the Gladstone line which is an imaginary line on 115°E longitude (see Figure 29). As such, the Margaret River Wine Industry Association (MRWIA) (2020) indicates that there are 100 cellar doors that receive one million day-trip and 1.6 million overnight visitors per year (see Figure 30). To reach a balance between regional economic drivers and the

region’s natural and cultural capital, the MRR is making firm attempts to achieve sustainability in different sectors promoted by global agendas, local policies, and grassroots initiatives (Sanders, 2006). While progress has been made in that regard, there are still challenges to that transition such as global warming (Jones et al., 2019, 2010; Sanders, 2006). For instance, global warming could result in the loss of tourist attractions, increased costs of adaptation and mitigation, and more investment to replace tourism capital (Garnaut, 2008). The 5th IPCC report (2014) indicates changes associated with climate change such as decreasing rainfall and decline in freshwater resources that could lead to significant reductions in agricultural production and a serious loss of biodiversity.



Figure 29: The Margaret River wine region MRWIA (2020, online)



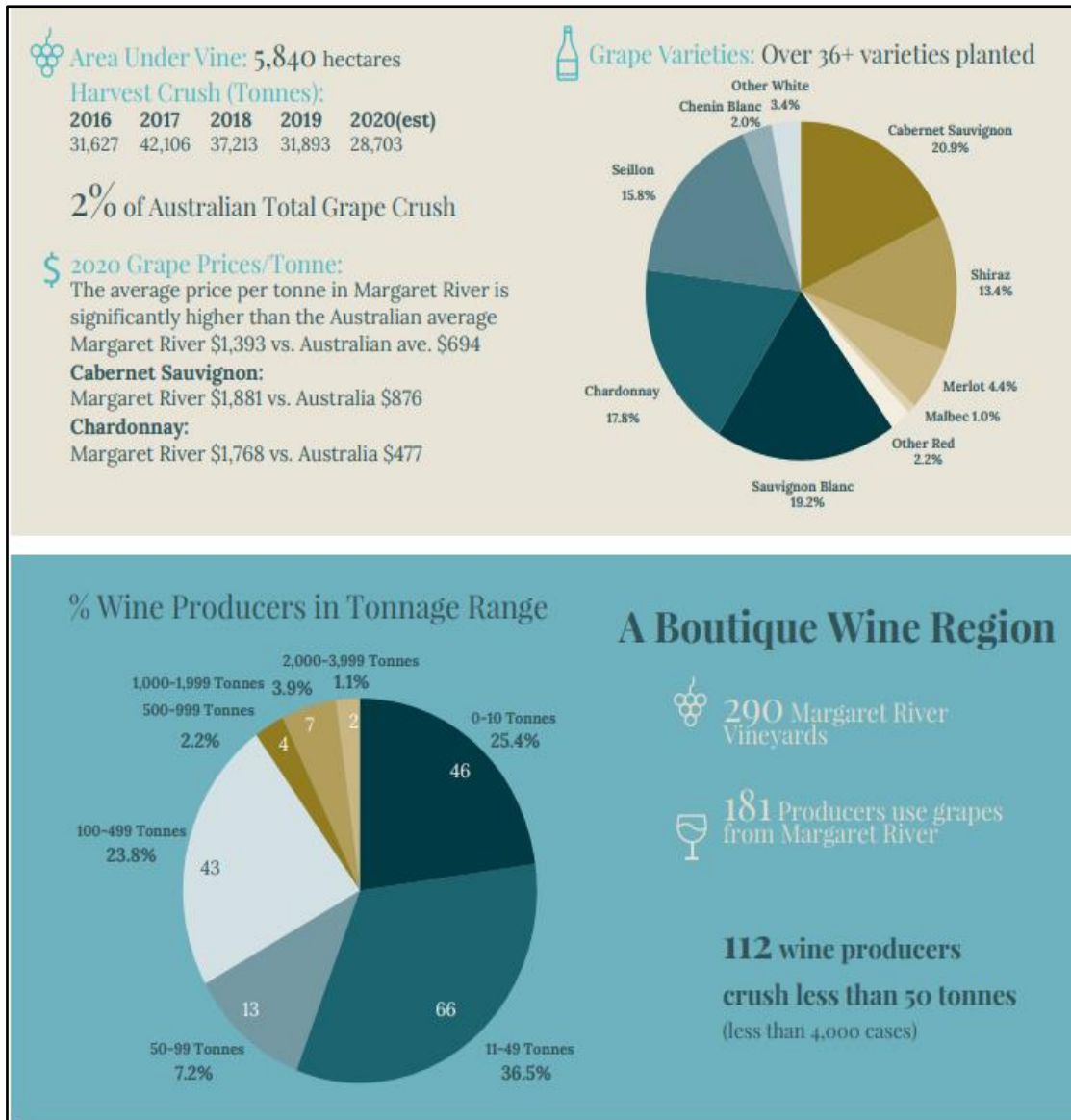


Figure 30: Overview of the Margaret River Wine region, MRWIA (2020, online)

The Australian Constitution establishes a federal system of government. It combines six states and two self-government territories, each with its own constitution, parliament, government, and laws (Moyer, 2008). While this system allows a balanced governance and reduces the negative aspects of centrality in the country, there are still discussions and court cases about the scope of the sovereignty of the six states (Evans, 2012). The Constitution defines the responsibilities of each level of government (federal, state, and territories) except for local government whose responsibilities are defined by the states they belong to. The Federal, state, territories, and local governments work together to provide the services that Australians require. For instance, the Federal Government is responsible for national

issues such communication, money, immigration, and defence; state and territory governments are responsible for regional issues such as public transport, schools, hospitals, and public housing, whereas local governments are responsible for issues regarding local communities including rubbish collection, recreation areas, pet control, and parking (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020b).

In that sense, some sectors, including tourism, are related to all three levels of government. For instance, tourism in the country could be affected by Federal decisions regarding immigration, state policies regarding public transportation, or local initiatives to promote more recreation areas and run visitor centres. Hence, in the Margaret River region there are two main actors involved in the tourism sector. On the one hand, there is Tourism WA which focuses on promoting the state's tourist attractions and supporting major projects to attract more visitors; while on the other hand, there is a local tourism association (Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association) which operates some local tourist attractions (mainly caves and an adventure park) and promotes the region for internal and international markets (Shire of Augusta Margaret River, 2022). Another important actor related to tourism at the destination is the Department of Biological Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) which is responsible for the management of the Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park (Conservation Commission of Western Australia, 2015; DBCA, 2018). Figure 31 presents the different groups of stakeholders of the tourism industry in the MRR and their interactions.



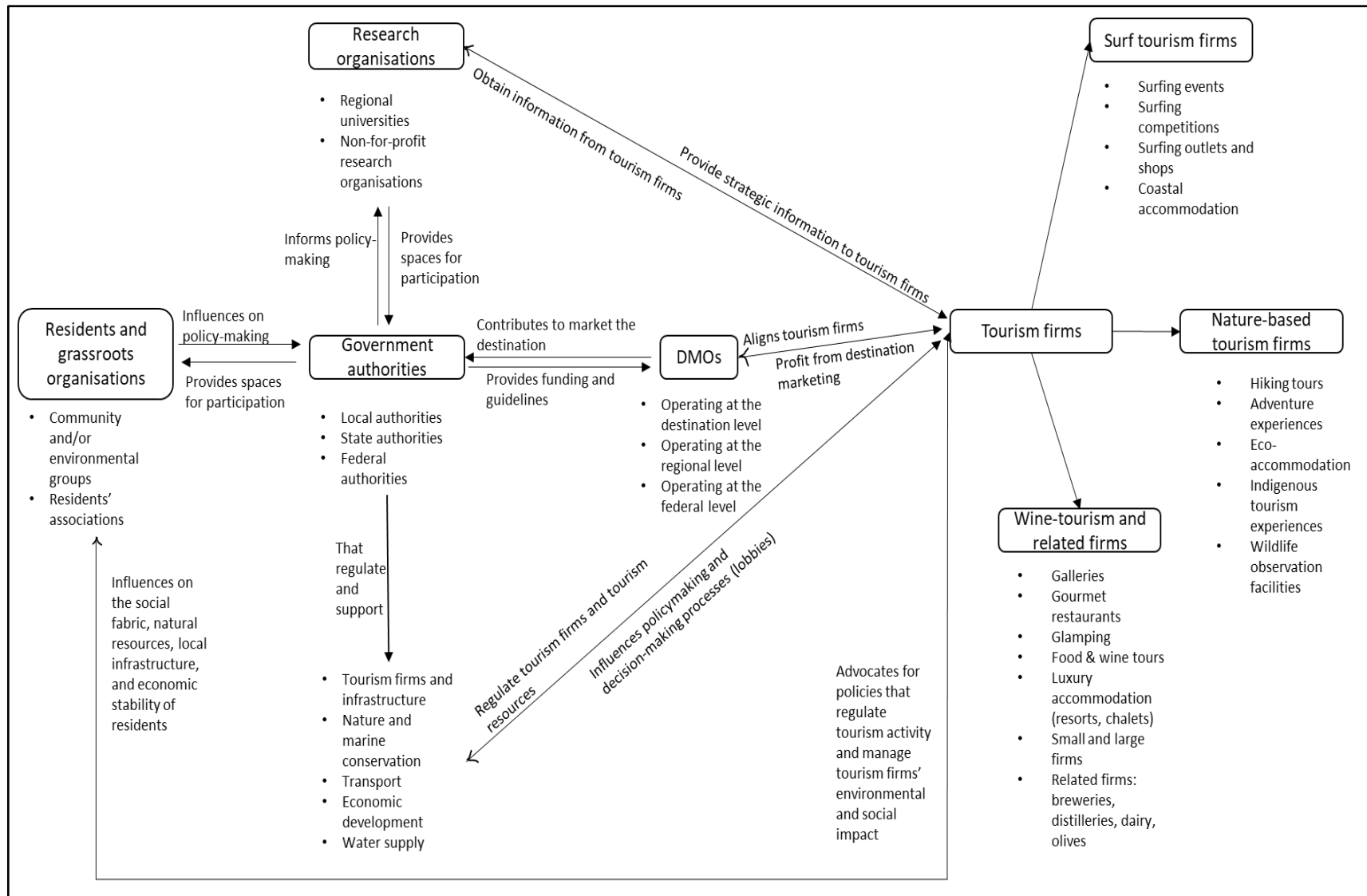


Figure 31: Components of the tourism sector in the MRR and their interactions

### 5.7.1. Tourism and policy frameworks applicable to the MRR

This subsection presents key policies at the Federal, state, and local levels that have direct implications with tourism in the area of study. In addition to the international policies and frameworks (see section 2.2.3), the area of study is governed by policies, plans, and frameworks from the Federal government, WA State government, shire of AMR, and city of Busselton. Below a list of the main ones within the scope of this thesis:

- Tourism Australian Act 2004 (Government of Australia, 2016): defines the structure, power, and functions of Tourism Australia including promoting the country as a destination to international markets, promoting domestic tourism, and encourage sustainable tourism in the country.
- Tourism WA two-year action plan 2018-2019 (Tourism WA, 2018): Although it has expired and currently Tourism WA is focused on the post-COVID-19 recovery of the tourism industry and therefore there is no new action plan, this plan is an important point of reference. This action plan focuses on the growth of international and domestic visitation to the state by means of promoting the various state destinations – including the MRR.
- Jina – WA Aboriginal tourism action plan 2021-2025 (Tourism WA, 2021): This action plan is aligned with the post-COVID-19 recovery plan for the state with a clear and strong focus on Aboriginal people and their participation in the tourism sector. While Aboriginal communities have already participated in tourism activities, this action plan includes an AU\$20 million budget to further engage Aboriginal people by means of developing infrastructure, booking systems, and innovative experiences tailored to the Aboriginal people's demands.
- Governance and Corporate Leadership (Shire of AMR, 2017): This local policy partially aligns with the Federal and State Governments action plans as it relates to tourism growth including a focus on international visitors (mainly from the Asian market), high-end infrastructure, and the destination brand. However, this policy also pays attention to the host community as it prioritises the community welfare over development proposals and proposes, shows

concern about the shire's natural and cultural heritage, and emphasises the role of tourism planning.

- Climate Action Plan 2020-2030 (Shire of AMR, 2021): This action plan is closely linked to the requirements that an Eco-destination must have to be certified by Ecotourism Australia. As such, this plan encompasses actions towards energy transitions, revegetation, sustainable agriculture, local consumption, low-carbon transportation, and advocate for sustainability-related policies at higher levels. Plus, given that this action plan is the result of a long participatory process is likely to have strong support from the local community. A key element in this action plan – compared to the other policies in higher levels – is its direct engagement with international sustainability-related agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.
- Local Planning Strategy 2019 (city of Busselton, 2019): This framework is a comprehensive document that provides the key local strategies to foster effective planning related to tourism development. The main focus of this document is to benefit tourism development in rural as it is considered as necessary for the development of the agricultural businesses. It appears that this framework is aligned with the Federal and State plans as there is an emphasis on development and growth. Compared to the AMR policies, this LGA's strategy does not emphasise the role of the community in decision-making processes about tourism development.

While those policies influence tourism in the MRR, using an MLP could allow the research to identify those that are part of the tourism regime in the MRR and those that are part of the landscape. For instance, policies at the state and local level could fall into the regulative category of tourism regime rules (see Table 10). As such, these policies provide the legal framework that reinforces the status quo of the tourism regime in the MRR. In turn, the Tourism Australia Act 2004 (Federal level) could be understood as part of the landscape. Nonetheless, given the complexity and multi-scalar nature of this legal context, it is possible that the policies identified in this subsection, regardless of the analytical level where they are situated, can provide conditions for the emergence and development of tourism niches in the MRR (for instance, WA Aboriginal tourism action plan 2021-2025 clearly aims to engage tourism niches related to community and Indigenous tourism).

Before closing this section, it is important to understand the main historical events in the region. In order to facilitate the understanding of these events, the research organises the historical development of the destination in five different periods based on Sanders (2006). Those periods are pre-European settlements (before 1830), early European settlements (1826-1850), thrive and decay of the timber industry (1840-1916), post-WWI and WWII settlement schemes (1914-1960), and recent wine and tourism industries (1960-onwards). It is important to mention that there is some overlap between the periods because they are continuous rather than discrete temporal stages. Along the historical development of the MRR, several industries, such as timber, dairy, wine, and tourism, emerged, developed, exited, relocated, declined, and re-emerged. These economic activities have influenced the evolution of tourism to its current condition (a thriving industry based on wine, sun and surf, and nature, that at the same time faces sustainability challenges). Sanders's (2006) historical analysis of the region is useful to understand the evolution of its tourist industry in the following chapters.

## **5.8. Summary and conclusions**

This chapter, the last one before the empirical chapters, has presented the methodology that underpins this thesis. The philosophical grounds for this research are Bhaskar's critical realism and Giddens's structuration theory. Informed by both, the research design followed a qualitative case study gathering data through semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The analysis of the findings used a retrodution approach which is recommended by critical realism and main scholars in sustainability transitions. The retrodution approach allowed the researcher to go beyond the empirical level and identify and explore the causal mechanisms and interactions as well as the actors with causal powers operating at the real and actual layers. Additionally, this chapter presented the ethical, power, and positionality issues that the researcher had to acknowledge, address, and overcome during the research. Finally, this chapter has provided contextual, legal, and historical information about the area of research. The following chapter will address the historical evolution of tourism in the MRR in more detail.

## Chapter 6.

### From caves to wine: the configuration of the current tourism regime in the MRR

“So the original tourists to the region really came to see the caves, and that was the driving force”

*(Interviewee 6)*

#### 6.1. Introduction

This is the first of four empirical chapters. Chapter 6 focuses on the historical evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination that started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and transformed remarkably during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period covers the emergence of an early tourism industry built around cave exploration to the current tourism industry based on wine, sun and surf, and nature-based experiences and events. This chapter analyses a transition process that took several decades to unfold where various landscape events disrupted a regime, creating an opportunity for two quasi-developed niches (surfing and wine-tourism) to drive a breakthrough into the regime level. This chapter is important because it explains the historical developments that resulted in the current regime. The chapter also contributes to the identification of persistent institutions and emerging path-shaping forces that are later addressed in Chapter 8 and 9. As such, Chapter 6 partially addresses the third and fourth research questions. Chapters 8 and 9 will complement this chapter to fully address those research questions.

This chapter is divided into five further sections. Section 6.2 provides a detailed history of the elements that interacted in order to provide tourism as a societal function until the early 1950s. The following section (section 6.3) conceptualises the cave-focused tourism sociotechnical regime in the MRR. Section 6.4 focuses on the transition process that reconfigured the cave-focused tourism regime into the current tourism regime. Section 6.5 uses the EEG / MLP framework to understand the particular trajectory of the transition, the role of agency and place-specific factors in the path-creation process, and the mechanisms used to escape the potential lock-in in the destination before the transition. Finally, section 6.6 summarises the findings of this chapter and prepares the ground for the next chapter.

## 6.2. A starting point: The cave-focused tourism period (1840s – 1950s)

This section provides details about the period between the 1840s and the 1950s that are useful to conceptualise the first tourism sociotechnical regime. This section builds mainly on historical records to describe the relevant elements of the tourism sociotechnical system in the MRR including tourism resources, access and accommodation infrastructure, tourism organisations, and regulations during the cave-focused tourism period.

It is very difficult to put a starting date on leisure travel in the MRR. Sanders (2006) argues that tourism, in the sense of movement of people from one place to another, was already practiced by the Noongar people and other Indigenous people before the arrival of European settlements in Australia. Likewise, he acknowledges that Dutch, English, and French navigators practised recreational activities while stopping along the coast of the region even before European settlements appeared in the MRR. In turn, whalers and sealers became regular visitors to the settlements, establishing trade and other social activities (Cresswell, 2003; Sanders, 2006). Leisure-oriented tourism in the MRR can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Daily News, 1934a; Sanders, 2006; The West Australian, 1902a; Western Mail, 1911). According to Sanders (2006), tourism activities in the MRR were minor and related to business and *visiting friends and relative* (VFR) until the discovery of caves in the eucalypt forests. Indeed, the caves in the region achieved an important recognition in WA. Battye (1912, p. 5) mentions that “those marvellous jewel houses, the southwest caves, are our [WA’s] glory and pride” (see also The West Australian, 1902b).

While the caves played a central role in the MRR as a tourist destination, the natural landscape, including tall native forests, beaches, and wildlife, also contributed to tourism in the region as acknowledged by several local newspapers of that time (see Bunbury Herald and Blackwood Express, 1923; Daily News, 1934b; Gravenall, 1946; The Week, 1928; Truth, 1916; Western Mail, 1930a). Interviewee 11, a tourism academic based in Perth (WA), mentioned that:

[T]here are a number of caves in the region (...) just a couple of them are accessible to the public and for tourists. But that [the caves] was the starting point of the tourism in the region, and it is still part of the tourism attractions today. [The caves] have lost their leading role as they had more than one hundred years ago (...) they are not that crucial anymore (...) but the caves are definitely (...) [drivers of] international trips to region (...) [and] domestic visitation (...)

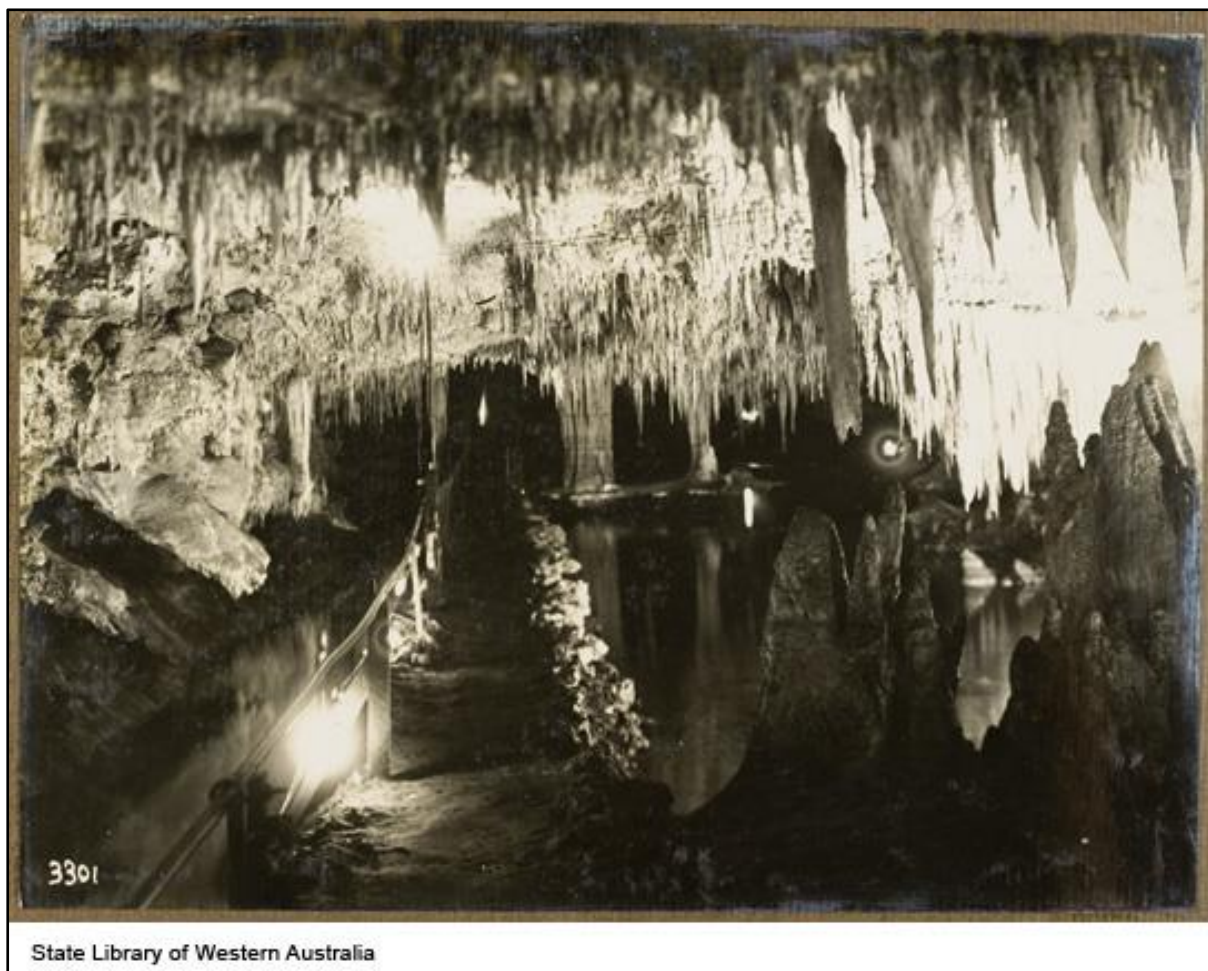
[Interviewee 11, February 2021]

Indeed, the caves had a leading role in tourism in the region for nearly six decades. Rundle (1996) argued that residents (European settlers) already knew some caves by 1870s (see also Brown, 1871; Inquirer and Commercial News, 1885), although it is possible to find mentions of caves in Augusta in the 1840s (see Perth Gazette, 1848; Summers, 2003). Due to the increasing reports about cave discoveries and to avoid further damage to caves from the timber industry (see Brown, 1871; Northam Advertiser, 1900), the WA Minister of Land declared a reserve of 6,600 ha over vacant Crown land to allow the completion of a cave inventory (Rundle, 1996). Likewise, a cave conservation committee was created in 1900 that became the Caves Board in 1902 (Australian Academy of Science et al., 1963; Caves Board, 1910). In that sense, it is important to indicate that one of the main threats to the caves and the surrounding native forest was the thriving timber industry (see Chapter 5). The reserve was gazetted into small cave reserves in 1902 which sowed the seeds for the creation of the Leeuwin-Naturalist national park (LNNP) decades later (Flood Chavez et al., 2023). The LNNP conserves a vast territory in the region which is visited by thousands of tourists every year (Rundle, 1996; Sanders, 2006, 1999). Interviewee 19, a conservation activist and long-term resident of Margaret River, elaborates on the importance of the national park:

(...) one good example is the national park, the whole coastline from Cape Naturalist to [Cape] Leeuwin has got a national park along with it. If environmentalists had not fought for that, that would have not happened either, and all would have been built up and exploited by now, so that is (...) the reason why we have so little coastal development. We can only have it [tourism development] where there was previous farmland because farmland was not included in the national park (...) and we are so lucky to have it [Leeuwin Naturaliste national park] because under the current pressures we would not have got it (...)

[Interviewee 19, March 2021]

Calls to preserve the caves for tourism purposes can be traced back to 1900 and 1902 (see Rundle, 1996, p. 229; Sanders, 1999, p. 224). During that time, a number of caves began to open to the public (see Figure 32). For instance, Ngilgi Cave (previously known as Yallingup Cave) opened to the public in 1900, Lake Cave in the following year, and Mammoth Cave opened in 1905 (MRBTA, n.d., n.d., n.d.; MRDHS, n.d.). Some of the caves required preparation such as steps and stairs, and electric lights prior to their opening, all of which was done by residents and the Caves Board (Northam Advertiser, 1900; Rundle, 1996). It is possible to infer that the caves had a profound impact on the MRR and became a pivotal element for the tourism industry and the destination image. For instance, Figure 33 implies that the limestone caves in the region were already used as pull factors in 1911.



*Figure 32: Picture of the interior of Lake Cave taken around 1928, National Library of Western Australia (1928, online)*



**WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

FOR PARTICULARS OF

**HEALTH and PLEASURE RESORTS,**

EMBRACING

**Hills, Islands, Forests, Lakes, Caves and Seaside,**

APPLY TO THE TOURIST OFFICER,

---

**IMMIGRATION, TOURIST,**

AND

**GENERAL - INFORMATION - DEPARTMENT,**

**Barrack Street, Perth.**

COUPON TOURS available to the INCOMPARABLE LIMESTONE  
CAVERNS at YALLINGUP and MARGARET RIVER.

**PASSAGES TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

Farmers, Farm Labourers, Vignerons, Orchardists, Market Gardeners, and Female Domestic Servants, resident in Great Britain,  
at from £2 to £5.

Applications for these Passages must be made to the AGENT-GENERAL for WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 15 VICTORIA  
STREET, LONDON, S.W.

Figure 33: Caves advertisement in the early 20th century, *Western Mail* (1911, p. 15)

As the caves gained more popularity (for instance, 13 caves were open for public by 1920 according to National Trust of W.A., 2022), tourism infrastructure and services started to develop around them. For instance, coupons including transport, accommodation at Caves Hotel, and entry to the caves were sold by the State Tourist Bureau (Kirk, 2020a; Summers, 2003; *The West Australian*, 1934). In the same vein, it is possible to identify public and private accommodation offering tours to visitors such as Caves House, Bridgefield Guesthouse, and Vasse Hotel (see Figure 34) (City of Busselton, 2022, 2017; National Trust of W.A., 2022; Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, 2019). According to Summers (2003) cave-tourism mainly had a recreational purpose although it also had an educational purpose until the 1920s as researchers came looking for fossils and to study the geology of the caves.

<p><b>A</b>CCOMMODATION, good, for Visitors to the Caves. Mail coach from Busselton to Margaret three times a week, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; fare, 10s. A conveyance leaves Margaret for Caves. Meals, 1s. 6d.; Beds, 1s. Good sporting country. T. E. Higgins, Margaret Bridge, Bridgefield.</p>	<p><b>T</b>HE CAVES, the Beautiful Caves.—A Coach runs from Busselton to the Yallingup Caves every Thursday and Sunday. A grand ride, full of interest. Fare, 10s. return. Starts from The Vasse Hotel. F. B. Vines, Proprietor.</p>
<p><b>C</b>. <b>J. H O U G H</b> wishes to inform his many friends and the general public that he has taken over the well known and centrally situated <b>VASSE HOTEL</b>. Coach leaves this Hotel every Sunday morning for Caves. Specials arranged on application. Good stabling. Pleasure Boats can be Hired. Tickets by coach should be secured Saturday Evening, to avoid disappointment.</p>	<p><b>H</b>OTEL <b>ESPLANADE</b>, Facing the Ocean, <b>BUSSELTON</b> (Vasse), the nearest point to the Margaret and Yallingup Caves. Magnificent Beach for Bathing. Visitors are advised to stay at this comfortable and well-appointed modern Hotel, where they will find everything up-to-date. Conveyances to the Caves may be hired. <b>H. W. MILLS, Proprietor.</b></p>

Figure 34: Advertisement of accommodation and transportation to the Caves, *The West Australian* (1902a, pp. 1, 3, 12)

Accommodation providers in the region already existed before caves became popular though. Those accommodation providers catered for business and trade travellers related to the timber industry, but soon changed their focus onto cave visitors (such as Bridgefield, Vasse Hotel, The Ship hotel, Burnside, Wallcliffe House) (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2013a; City of Busselton, 2021; South Western Times, 1919; *The West Australian*, 1902a). Likewise, there was accommodation built specifically to cater for cave visitors. The aforementioned Caves House (originally under the name Yallingup Cave Accommodation House and Cave House Yallingup) was one of the most famous ones in the region. It was built between 1902 and 1904 by the WA government (City of Busselton, 2022, 2021; National Trust of W.A., 2022; Rundle, 1996). Decades later, more accommodation was built in order to cater for the increasing visitation to the region. For instance, in 1936 the Margaret River hotel opened and soon became an important accommodation establishment in the region (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2013b).

Caves House became a popular destination for caves visitors and honeymooners, all coming mainly from Perth (City of Busselton, 2022; Kirk, 2020a; Sanders, 2000; Summers, 2003). This hotel was under public management from its opening until 1965 when it was sold to a private owner. During that time, Caves House went under the management of Caves Board, State Tourist Bureau, and the State Hotels Department (City of Busselton, 2021; Sanders, 2006; Summers, 2003). Under public management, Caves House provided housing for staff, electric energy for Ngilgi cave, and a coupon-based booking system. This system included railway fare, motor transportation from and to Busselton, and accommodation at Caves Hotel. It also offered reduced prices during summer holidays (The West Australian, 1934). Caves Hotel also provided innovative services for the visitors such as bar, picnic area, golf courses, and hiking tours. The original Caves House (see Figure 35) was rebuilt in 1938 following a fire in 1930 and remained as the premier accommodation in the region until the 1960s (City of Busselton, 2022; Summers, 2003).



Figure 35: The original Caves House built in 1903, Kirk (2020a picture supplied by Blue Wren, online)

In terms of accessibility, tourism initially benefited from the existing road network built for the timber industry which was the main economic activity while tourism was unfolding in the region (see Chapter 5). A railway line connecting Perth and Busselton, and roads connecting towns such as Yallingup and Margaret River, had been built by the time cave-tourism became popular (see Figure 36). The railway line and Karridale road (now known as Bussell Highway) offered access to the region, but they did not provide access to the caves. Wilson (2018) explains that a coastal road between Busselton and Yallingup provided access to Ngilgi caves (see also Brockman, 1893). In 1903, as more caves were discovered in the south of the region, the Caves Board led the construction of Caves Road which was completed in 1907 (Erskine, 1900; Wilson, 2018). The first motor car party to the caves took place that same year (Western Mail, 1932).

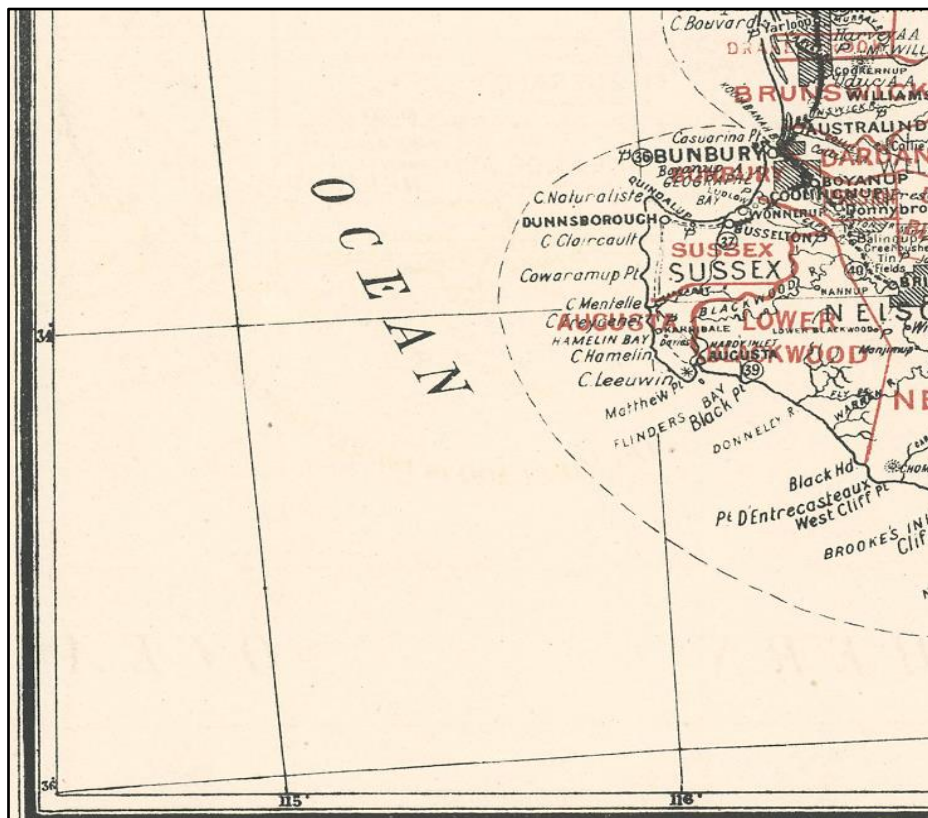


Figure 36: Roads and railway network in the Southwest region in 1898. The railway is shown as bold black lines while roads as dashed black double-lines. From WA Department of Lands and Survey (1898, online)

By 1921 Caves Road connected Yallingup and Augusta allowing not only the exploration of caves but also of beaches (see Figure 37) (Bunbury Herald and

Blackwood Express, 1921; Wilson, 2018). The exploration of the region’s natural amenities was further increased when omnibuses started to operate from Busselton to Yallingup and other towns, replacing the old horse and carriage (Kirk, 2020a; Wilson, 2018). In that sense, tourism also contributed to the accessibility of the region besides the timber industry. As Interviewee 42, a long-term resident and owner of an accommodation with a rich history in the MRR, indicated:

(...) There’s always been a long history of tourism in the area [MRR]. Caves road (...) was established as a tourist road in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one of the first tourist roads in Australia, because of the natural caves that are along that route. So the original tourists to the region really came to see the caves, and that was the driving force. But that was fairly minor (...) we didn’t get international visitors or anything like that, and it [the MRR] wasn’t recognised very widely (...)

[Interviewee 42, May 2021]



Figure 37: Road network in the Southwest region in 1919. The most western road is Caves Road while the parallel road (right) is Bussell Road. From Pether (1919, online)

In that same context, according to Sanders (2006), a key event that improved the accessibility of the caves and contributed to a relative *tourism boom* in the MRR was



the extension of the railway from Busselton to Flinders Bay in Augusta, completed in 1925 (see Figure 38) (see also Ecoscape, 2010; Sunday Times, 1938; WA Government Railways, 1929). As happened with other accessibility projects in the region, this railway line was built over existing infrastructure related to the timber industry such as the Claymore timber line. Indeed, the WA government bought private timber railways and improved them for passengers transport (Ecoscape, 2010; Sanders, 2006; Southern Times, 1916; The West Australian, 1925). During the inaugural event of the completed railway WA Minister for Works indicated that this line would contribute to bring more visitors to the region (The West Australian, 1925). Nonetheless, it is necessary to remark that the main driver of this infrastructure was not tourism. Instead, the new line aimed to support the group settlements and their economic activities such as agriculture, dairy, and timber (see Chapter 5) (Sanders, 2006; The West Australian, 1925). All in all, the improved accessibility resulted in increasing visitation to the region, especially during summer holidays (The West Australian, 1934).



Figure 38: Railway network in the MRR in 1928. From WA Railways, tramways, and electricity supply and WA Tourist bureau (1928, online)

It is possible to notice that cave-focused tourism contributed to economic growth in the region. For instance, accommodation and transport infrastructure were built (Caves House, Caves Road) as well as tourism-related businesses emerged (see Kirk, 2020a; Sunday Times, 1916; Westralian Worker, 1936). Evidently, this growth would have not been possible without the intervention of public and private organisations. The Caves Board (1902-1910), State Hotels department (1903-1960), and the Tourist and Publicity bureau (1921-1959) were among the most significant public organisations in the destination. After its dissolution in 1910, the Caves Board became part of the Immigration, Tourism, and General Information office which in 1914 gave the responsibility to look after the caves and to manage state hotels to the State Hotel department. It was in 1921 when the first WA public organisation dedicated to tourism was created (the Tourist Bureau). The WA Minister of Land and Survey and WA Minister of Work also contributed indirectly to the development of tourism in the region (Battye, 1912; Rundle, 1996; Wood, 2009). In terms of acts and regulations, the first tourist legislation can be traced back to 1959. However, the Parks and Reserves Act of 1895 (by-laws referring to the caves in the MRR were added in 1922) already provided a legal framework to protect the caves as a promising recreational and educational resource. In the same vein, residents and tourism-related businesses created the Busselton Tourism Association in 1932 that had a minor role in the conservation and promotion of the caves during this period (MRBTA, 2019; Nicholls, 1966). In sum, all these organisations contributed to the recognition of the MRR as a cave-based tourist destination (see Brady, 1939; Nicholls, 1966).

Despite becoming a popular domestic destination (mainly for Perth residents), global (the Great Depression and World War II) and national (for instance, increasing unemployment in rural areas) events slowed tourism in the region (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004; LISWA, 2000; Sanders, 2006; Snooks, 1973). Indeed, during the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s, visitation numbers declined, public investment decreased (for instance, the Busselton – Augusta line started to close in 1957), and unemployment increased (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004; Ecoscape, 2010; Gruen and Clark, 2009; Sanders, 2006; Snooks, 1973; Summers, 2003; Wood, 2009). Sanders (2006, p. 260) indicated that this scenario “resulted in the region falling into tourism obscurity (...)”. Those global and national events also

impacted other local industries such as agriculture and dairy (Cresswell, 2003; Sanders, 2006; Snooks, 1973). Yet, tourism industry in the MRR remained underpinned mainly by the attractiveness of its caves (see, for instance, Nicholls, 1966).

### **6.3. Conceptualising the cave-focused tourism regime**

Having presented a fine-grained historical development of the MRR as a tourist destination, this subsection uses the MLP and the concept of path-dependence to conceptualise the tourism sociotechnical regime of the cave-focused period. Considering that the regime is the core structure of any sociotechnical system (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels, 2011), it is necessary to bear in mind the tourism sociotechnical regime discussed in Chapter 4. In that sense, this subsection presents the *deep structure* of the system and addresses the mechanisms through which it steers the system towards a particular trajectory. As such, this subsection also points out the double-structuration process (see Giddens, 1986 and Chapter 5) that takes place between the tourism sociotechnical system, the involved actors and networks, and the *semi-coherent* set of rules or the regime. Finally, the subsection discusses the potential lock-in trajectory of cave-focused tourism in the MRR due to the influence of the regime.

As indicated, Chapter 4 provided an adapted example of a tourism sociotechnical system that fulfils the societal function of leisure tourism, based on Hall (2016). Hall (2016, based on Geels, 2011) also mentions that every sociotechnical system carries a sociotechnical regime that is responsible for maintaining it on a particular trajectory (see also Geels and Schot, 2007). Likewise, considering the place-dependent and place-specific elements of a destination (Brouder, 2014a; Saarinen, 2004), it is possible to identify the core structure that provides stability, orientation and structure to the tourism sociotechnical system (see Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels, 2018; Geels and Schot, 2007) of the MRR by paying attention to its evolution. Indeed, several studies of other societal functions have proven the usefulness of the MLP in identifying sociotechnical regimes by means of addressing the historical evolution of a given sociotechnical system (see Derwort et al., 2021; Geels, 2005a, 2002a). However, identifying the regime is not a simple task, as argued by Fuenfschilling and Truffer (2014) (see also Sorrell, 2018). They suggest



focusing on the level of structuration and institutionalisation within the sociotechnical system in order to identify the “heterogeneous and semi-coherent” sociotechnical regime (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014, p. 786).

Based on the detailed historical review presented in subsection 6.2, it is possible to notice a particular arrangement (sociotechnical regime) that steered the tourism sociotechnical system. Figure 39 presents a graphical depiction of the regime where the most prominent element are the caves. Even though the destination had other tourism resources such as native forests, the coastline, and the Leeuwin lighthouse, none of them played as important a role as the caves. Indeed, the caves in the region underpinned the enactment of conservation regulation, the creation of conservation- and tourism-related public and private organisations, public and private investment in accommodation and transport infrastructure, the destination image, and the development of integrated booking systems. In the same vein, it is possible to notice a strong participation of WA authorities which, within time, incorporated new roles such as accommodation provider, booking manager, and marketing organiser. Once again, all these roles were underpinned by the popularity of the caves. In the case of artefacts, caves visitors benefited from the technological development in terrestrial transportation.

Once the sociotechnical regime has been conceptualised, it is necessary to understand how it constrains the sociotechnical system into a particular trajectory. That is, it is essential to address “how the regime seeks to retain its configuration and resist system innovation” (Coenen et al., 2012, p. 971). In order to address such a process, Geels (2005c) focuses on the interrelation between the sociotechnical system, the involved actors, and the rules (cognitive, normative, and regulative). This interplay contributes to the structuration of the regime, thus leading to its institutionalisation (Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels, 2005c). In turn, by addressing this interaction, this subsection acknowledges the role of actors in producing and reproducing the regime rules as recommended by other studies (see Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels, 2011, 2005c).

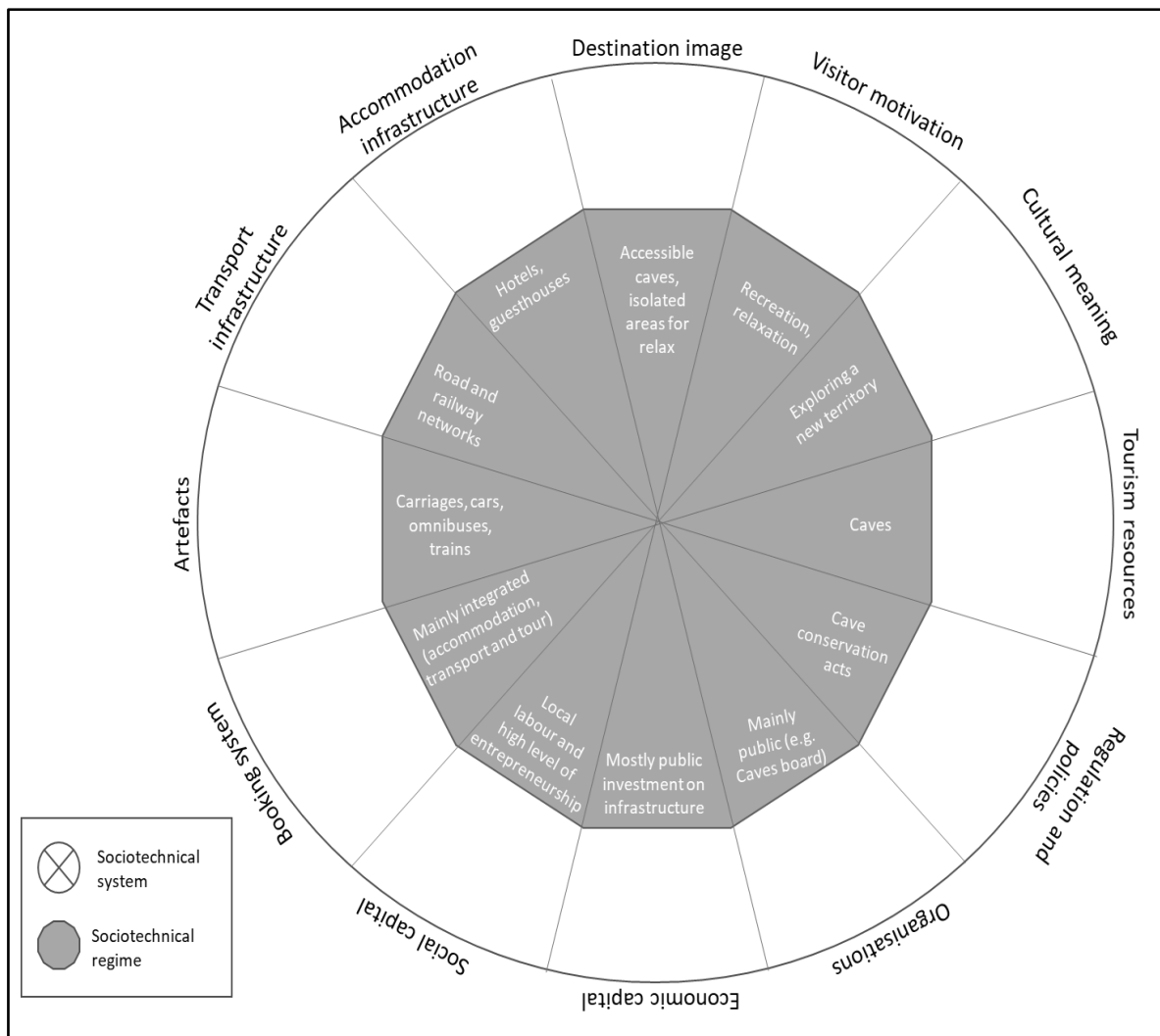


Figure 39: Tourism sociotechnical regime during the cave-focused tourism period, adapted from Fuentschilling and Truffer (2014, figure 2)

In that sense, based on the previous subsection and Figure 39, a set of actors appear that are producing and reproducing the regime rules. Those actors are mainly WA authorities with special interests in the conservation, popularisation, and accessibility of the caves. However, it is also possible to notice small private accommodation, transport, and tour providers, as well as local tourism organisations that emerged in the last decades of the cave-focused tourism period. The visitors are also a relevant actor in the tourism sociotechnical system as without them tourism does not take place (see Chapter 3). In turn, these actors produce and reproduce a set of rules which are presented in Figure 40. As noted, they are divided in cognitive, normative, and regulative following the extant MLP literature. Importantly, the regulation and policies within the sociotechnical system are not necessarily the same

as the ones in the regime. As Geels (2011) pointed out, the elements within the system are tangible while the regime rules consist of underlying structures. Importantly, while most of the regime rules in the MRR aim to protect the caves from other industries, they do not consider protecting them from the impacts of tourism. This type of inconsistencies within the rules is what Geels (2011, 2005c) referred to as the *semi-coherent nature* of the sociotechnical regime (see also Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014).

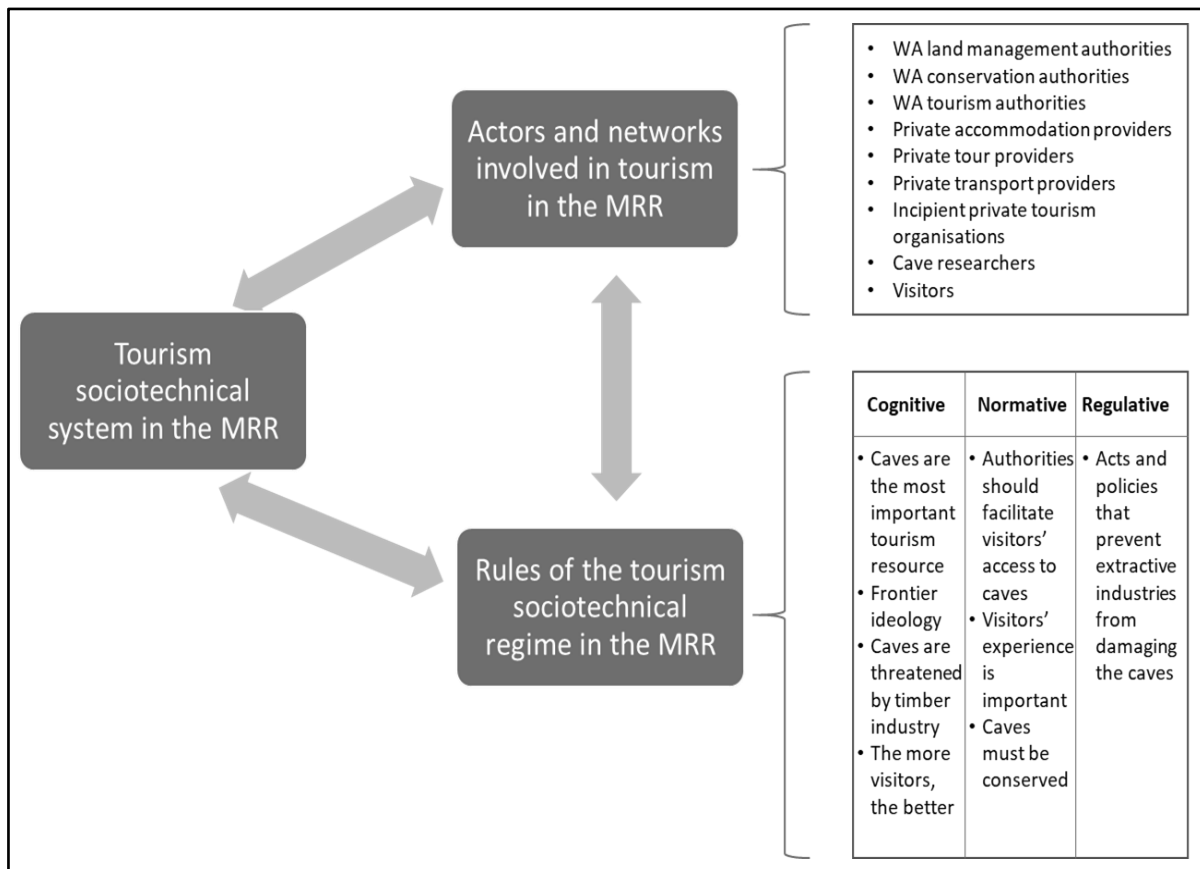


Figure 40: The interaction between the tourism sociotechnical system, tourism sociotechnical regime, and actors in the MRR, based on Geels (2005c, p. 17, figure 1.6)

Following the historical development of the MRR as a tourist destination during the cave-focused tourism period, it is possible to notice that the tourism sociotechnical system seemed blind to other tourism resources, whether natural such as the coastline and native forests or cultural such as the Leeuwin lighthouse. Hence, the trajectory of the tourism sociotechnical system was a result of the increasing structuration of the regime as a consequence of the continuous interplay depicted in

Figure 40. In fact, the tourism sociotechnical regime led to incremental innovation that would only prioritise accessibility and better experiences at the caves. Likewise, other activities with a high potential for tourism, such as surfing that was already popular in nearby areas in the 1930s, for instance Bunbury or Perth (see *The Daily News*, 1932; *Western Mail*, 1930b, 1929), did not receive attention in the MRR. Furthermore, despite the impact of the Great Depression and WWII, no intention to revitalise or renew tourism could be identified in historical records or interview analysis. Indeed, as indicated in the literature review, regimes tend to exhibit path-dependence which could lead to a lock-in situation.

Based on Martin and Sunley's (2006, p. 412) possible sources of regional path-dependence and considering the historical evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination, Table 18 presents the identified sources of path-dependence of the tourism sociotechnical regime in the MRR during this period. Another source of path-dependence is the destination image. As noted in the previous section, marketing of the region placed the caves as the main asset to attract visitors to the MRR. The destination image became an element that required maintenance to keep the destination attractive. Private entrepreneurs' provision of accommodation, transport, and tours based on the caves could have contributed to the constraining role of the destination image. In contrast to the current destination that exhibits more complex internal and external relations, during that period the main destination manager and marketer were public authorities. As such, it is possible to suggest that the management and marketing of the destination image was relatively simple. This feature could have also contributed to reinforcing the role of the destination image as a source of path-dependence for the regime.

Table 18: Sources of path-dependence of the tourism sociotechnical regime in the MRR during the cave-focused tourism period, based on Martin and Sunley (2006)

Type of source	Source at the destination	Description
Natural resource based	Caves	During the evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination there has been a dependency on the caves as a distinct pull-factor. As a result, the tourism sociotechnical has grown based on the conservation and increasing popularity of the caves.
Region-specific institutions, social forms, and cultural traditions	Cave Board and subsequent public institutions	The Caves Board was created to manage and promote the conservation of the caves in the destination. The Board advocated for policies, investment, and infrastructure to make the caves accessible and, as a result, the caves gained protection from WA authorities and popularity in nearby regions (mainly Perth). The subsequent institutions maintained the duties of the Board and added other duties with more emphasis on tourism.
Region (destination) image	Destination image based on isolated unique caves easily accessible	This source of path-dependence is not suggested by Martin and Sunley (2006, p. 412). However, based on the historical development of the region, the image of the destination that was used for marketing purposes contributed to reinforce the trajectory of the destination. The use of the image can be found on newspaper and magazine advertising for the MRR.

Hassink (2010) defines a regional lock-in as the result of multiple lock-ins that manifest within a region influenced by internal (rules) and external factors which explain a region's decline and lack of renewal attempts. According to him, the latter is the consequence of a strong regional lock-in. Based on that, the evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination during the cave-focused period exhibited a regional lock-in trajectory with negative outcomes such as decline, as argued by Sanders (2006). Hence, it can be inferred that the lock-in taking place in the MRR had a negative connotation. However, a global period of economic recovery after WWII led to an economic shift of WA's economy in the late 1950s and following decades. This global scenario combined with other local events resulted in a major change in the evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination. This period of change is addressed in the following section.

#### **6.4. The transition journey of sun and surf and wine-tourism (late 1950s – 1990s)**

This section builds on Geels's (2004a) phases of transitions to provide a step-by-step analysis of historical transition that took place in the MRR as a tourist destination (see also Geels, 2011; Rotmans et al., 2001a). This section identifies the niches as spaces that emerged and unfolded in early stages outside the existing tourism regime. While the niches emerged out of the tourism regime, this does not mean that they were unaware of the regime rules and structures. This goes in line with the developed ontology of the MLP that no longer considers the three analytical levels as a nested hierarchy (see Geels, 2011). As such, phases zero and one (partially) address the niches as spaces unconnected to tourism (surfing, wine industry). However, as the transition unfolded, their linkages with tourism became more evident and more strongly resulting in, for instance, sun and surf-tourism and wine-tourism. While the transition journey is based on Geels (2004a), each of the transition phases has been adapted to fit with the particular characteristics of tourism in the MRR. This section identifies four phases:

- Phase zero: pre-transition phase
- Phase one: emergence of niches
- Phase two: breakthrough in tourism
- Phase three: rearrangement of the regime

As noted, this section suggests an additional phase (the pre-transition phase) prior to those three in order to account for the pre-existing conditions that contributed directly or indirectly to the emergence of the niches (Baumgartinger-Seiringer et al., 2022; Martin, 2010). In that sense, four transition phases are presented below.

##### **6.4.1. Phase zero: Pre-transition phase (before 1950)**

This phase entails the pre-existing conditions that influenced directly or indirectly the emergence of surfing and wine industry in the region (the niches). In that sense, this phase refers to “pre-existing resources, competences, skills, and experiences that have been inherited from previous local paths and patterns of economic development” (Martin, 2010, p. 20) that can condition regional – or destination – trajectories. Specifically, in the case of the MRR as a tourist destination, those pre-

existing conditions are related and, to some extent, a result of the regime structuration process. For instance, surfing, viticulture, and wine production had already manifested in the region but merely as intermittent and disperse activities. However, the local knowledge derived from those activities contributed to the later emergence of sun and surfing and wine industry as clear niches.

In the case of wine, Forrestal and Jordan (2017) report that vineyards in Vasse in the 1830s were used to produce wine mainly for sale to North American whalers who regularly stopped in the area, and also to local timber workers. These authors also indicate that in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Spanish and Italian migrants also planted vines and produced wine on a minor scale, mainly for family use, although, in some cases, they sold it to residents. Among those settlers, the Credaro family managed to shift from producing wine for family use in the 1920s to become a major regional winery (Credaro Family Estate, 2022; Forrestal and Jordan, 2017). Yet, it was not possible to identify at that time a local wine industry *per se*, but minor viticulture activities scattered across the region. The wine produced during this phase was very different from the current wine style. Wine was fortified and not produced at high-quality standards (Cresswell, 2003; Forrestal and Jordan, 2017; Sanders, 2006) and there was no demand for table wine in WA or Australia until the 1960s (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017). However, these minor activities informed wine researchers and entrepreneurs in the mid-1960s in their search for new areas for viticulture.

In the case of surfing in the MRR, it is possible to trace some surf enthusiasts back to the 1930s who could access beaches (for instance, Yallingup) as a result of the improvements of Caves Road (The Daily News, 1936; The West Australian, 1939, 1932a, 1932b; Wilson, 2018). During that time beaches in the MRR were mainly used by residents as holiday and picnic spots or by fishermen, some of whom built shacks nearby (Sanders, 2000). While surfing was practically unknown in the MRR, it was already becoming popular in the late 1920s at beaches near Perth such as Cottesloe, Scarborough, and Bunbury (north of Busselton) (see The Daily News, 1932; Western Mail, 1930b, 1929). It is possible to infer that although surfers knew about the existence of beaches in the southwest, they preferred to surf at beaches closer to Perth which were already popular (McDonald-Lee, 2016). Information about

the southwest beaches as potential surfing sports would prove to be useful during the 1950s.

The knowledge generated from these activities was crucial for the decisions taken by actors in the niches that would emerge in the late 1950s. It is possible to find some similarities between this phase and the learning process of local projects towards the conformation of a global niche-level (an emerging network that exhibits some degree of structuration) (see Geels and Raven, 2006). For instance, Schot and Geels (2008, p. 543) observed that single projects motivated by “idiosyncratic or local reasons” can produce knowledge (among other factors) that can contribute to define the structure and trajectory of niches. While in this phase it is irrelevant to mention other analytical levels as no transition was taking place, the upcoming phases do acknowledge the landscape, regime, and niches interactions.

#### 6.4.2. Phase one: Emergence of niches in the MRR (late 1950s – late 1970s)

After WWII there were a series of global, national, WA state, and local scale factors that disrupted the cave-focused tourism regime and created adequate conditions for the emergence of niches. This subsection – and the following ones – indicate the events and processes taking place in the landscape and regime. Then, considering the multiple niches that emerged in the region, this subsection addresses each tourism niche separately. This individual focus on the niches identifies the particular forms through which the landscape and regime factors influenced each of the niches. The landscape events and processes during this period unfolded at different geographical scales (global, national, state, and regional). The regional landscape factors are those that occurred outside the regime analytical level and include factors derived or related to regional industries such as dairy. As all those factors are outside the tourism regime in the MRR, it is possible to consider them as landscape factors. As Schot and Geels (2007) contended, the landscape can encompass a heterogeneous set of factors that are out of the influence of the regime in the short-term. Likewise, it is important to remark that while the emergence of the niches started in the 1950s, the landscape factors can be traced back some years earlier to the end of WWII in 1945.



At the global scale, the processes after WWII were reshaping the world in many forms (see Harvey, 1991; Niewiadomski, 2020). For instance, the global economy was exhibiting a good performance, international trade was booming, and major technological advances became popular and affordable, such as television and air travel. Evidently, Australia, WA, and the MRR were no stranger to those global changes (Copland, 1954; Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004; Sanders, 2006). After WWII, Australia aimed to provide a high level of employment and to carry out an ambitious immigration plan (Copland, 1954); correspondingly, WA exhibited a strong population and economic growth. The population growth was underpinned by the War Service Land Settlement Scheme (WSLSS) and other WWII displaced immigrants, while economic growth was based on increasing wool and iron ore exports (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004; Office of Multicultural Interests, 2012). Besides, as a result of technological innovation during WWII, non-stop 3-hour domestic flights between Perth and Adelaide started to operate from 1955 compared to previous 25-hour flights (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004; Litten and Grainger, 2021). Those flights departed from the recently repurposed airport in Guildford (Perth) that was previously used by the Royal Australian Air Force during WWII (Perth Airport, 2022). At the same time, car ownership was increasing in WA (Sanders, 2006). A better economic situation together with affordable and faster ways of transportation in WA (and Australia), contributed to a renewed interest in the MRR as a tourist destination from 1960.

These landscape factors influenced changes in the local economic landscape. For instance, the WSLSS, that had commenced in 1945, was going to be impacted by the economic growth that the country was experiencing after WWII. As described in Chapter 5, this scheme aimed to mainly establish dairy as an economic activity on the land that had already been cleared by the previous group settlement scheme. Nonetheless, economic growth in WA made available land more expensive, forcing the scheme to change its focus towards vacant crown land that needed to be cleared and conditioned. Likewise, as the country was committed to achieve high levels of employment, labour also became more expensive (Barrett, 1965; Logan et al., 1957; Sanders, 2006). Those factors forced the dairy industry to relocate to Harvey (approximately 90 km north of Busselton) leaving plenty of affordable cleared land in the MRR (Sanders, 2006). In terms of state-wide policies related to tourism, this

period was marked by two subsequent tourist acts. The first tourist act (1959-1970) established the WA Tourist Development Authority and a Tourist Fund, whereas the subsequent Act (1973-1981) added the Tourist Advisory Council to support the existing tourist authority (Government of Western Australia, 1973, 1959).

Importantly, while both acts aimed to promote the growth of tourism, the second act paid attention to the increasingly important role of the private sector in tourism. In fact, the new council did not only include members of the related WA departments, but also representatives of local authorities, local DMOs, WA Accommodation Council, and WA branches of the Australian Federation of Travel and the Australian Hotel Association. The latter represented a clear change of roles between tourism authorities and private tourism stakeholders. Indeed, this progressive relevance of private actors also took place in the tourism regime in the MRR, as addressed below.

The many changes taking place at the landscape level, had an impact on the cave-focused tourism regime in the MRR. As indicated in the end of section 6.2, the 1950s was a tumultuous period for tourism in the MRR marked by declining public investment and interest on tourism (Sanders, 2006; Wood, 2009). Considering the economic bonanza in WA after WWII, this scenario for tourism in the MRR could be explained by a WA government focus on primary industries, such as mining and agriculture (see Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004). As a result, the tourism industry in the MRR could not exhibit a quick and strong economic recovery from the impact of previous global shocks such as the Great Depression and WWII. Consequently, during this period it was possible to notice an unstable tourism regime struggling between path-dependence and lock-in factors (see section 6.3) and the search for new paths.

As a manifestation of the former, some incremental shifts took place at the regime level. For instance, by the end of the 1950s the WA State Hotels department had left the management of Ngilgi cave (former known as Yallingup cave) to the Busselton Tourist Bureaux (later known as Geographe Bay tourism association), and Mammoth, Lake, Moondyne and Jewel (opened to the public in 1959) caves to the AMR Tourist Bureaux (MRBTA, 2019; Rundle, 1996; Wood, 2009). Likewise, during this period the iconic Caves Hotel went gradually from public to private ownership.

Between 1960 and 1965 the hotel was leased to a private group that invested in infrastructure not only for visitors to Ngilgi cave, but also for those visiting Yallingup beach. In 1968, the hotel was finally sold to former farmers Norman and Horace Emmott. Private ownership also meant new investment in tourism infrastructure such as better access roads for cars (City of Busselton, 2022; National Trust of W.A., 2022).

The regime's focus on caves expanded to other natural elements that had previously had a minor role in the destination such as beaches and forests (National Trust of W.A., 2022). Another important tourism development took place in Prevelly, south of Yallingup. A WWII ex-soldier and his family opened Prevelly Caravan Park in 1953 in order to cater for visitors looking for options different than the caves (Sanders, 2006, 2000; Shire of Augusta Margaret River, 2022). Soon, Caves House later emulated that project and developed Caves Caravan Park in the 1960s (see for instance Figure 41).



*Figure 41: Visitors celebrating Easter at Caves Caravan Park in Yallingup in 1966, King (2021 picture taken by Colleen Burke, online)*

These incremental changes responded to the increasing number of caravans that were mass produced in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s (Caldicott, 2011). Sanders (2006, 1999) reported an increasing visitation to the southwestern forests by Perth tourists due to the popularisation of the motor car and caravans. As a result, WA authorities had a change of attitude about the forests potential for tourism activities, especially during the 1970s. The WA Department of Conservation and Land Management enacted policies to prevent timber operations in areas with important scenic value. Likewise, it was in this decade that the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park was gazetted covering 15,600 hectares under the management of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (Frewer et al., 1989; Sanders, 1999). The LNNP not only considered forest conservation but also caves management. Although this new focus on natural resources (beaches and forests) represented a change from a single focus on the caves, it did not change the prevalence of the caves as the main pull factor of the region during this phase. Yet, it does demonstrate that the regime was being gradually destabilised by landscape pressures.

All in all, while still clinging to the popular caves, the tourism regime was not reluctant to expand its focus onto other natural elements such as beaches and forests. Yet, as the emphasis was still on natural resources, it is not possible to indicate a radical shift in the destination. However, amid those changes at the landscape and regime levels, four niches emerged in the MRR: coastal towns, surfing, alternative lifestyle, and local wine industry. It is important to remark that during this phase, some niches such as holiday coastal towns and surfing engaged with tourism as soon as they emerged. In the case of the former, they had a clear tourist purpose; and in the case of the latter, its emergence was the result of tourists looking for new surfing spots. Meanwhile, other niches such as alternative lifestyle and wine industry took some time before engaging with tourism. The particularities about the emergence of each niche are presented below.

#### 6.4.2.1. Emergence of coastal holiday towns

As the region was receiving more visitors during the late 1950s, beaches that were picnic spots for local people became the target of ambitious plans involving tourism development. The most remarkable ones were the coastal developments in

Yallingup, Prevelly, and Gracetown (McDonald-Lee, 2016; Sanders, 2000). Yallingup was the first coastal development that subdivided into several lots for holiday homes in 1958, then Prevelly in 1959, and Gracetown in the 1962 (Cresswell, 2003; Sanders, 2000). The emergence of these coastal towns was the result of local entrepreneurs, some of them being former WWII soldiers, as in the case of Prevelly, who saw a profitable opportunity in the increasing number of visitors interested in the region's beaches. Coastal development was taking place at a rapid pace during the 1950s in other coastal areas in the eastern side of Australia (Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast in Queensland) (Sanders, 2000; Wesley and Pforr, 2010). These projects had to overcome several challenges such as electricity and water supply, car accessibility, and financial security (Sanders, 2000). During this phase these coastal developments focused on advertising and building infrastructure in order to become profitable (see Figure 42). City surfers and holiday makers coming from Perth would become the primary market for these developments (Sanders, 2006, 2000).

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 Western Australia.

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Figure 42: Real estate development in Yallingup adverts in 1968 and 1972, King (2015, online)

#### 6.4.2.2. Emergence of surfing

The relocation of the dairy industry led to vacant and affordable land in the MRR that was acquired by the new influx of visitors. The improved accessibility to the region as a result of public stimuli to support the WSLSS benefited the new influx of visitors during the 1960s (Brayshay and Selwood, 2002; Jones et al., 2015b, 2019; Jones and Jones, 2020; Langfield, 1999; Pollard, 1942; Sanders, 2006; The Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, 2012). Improved accessibility enabled city surfers (surfers coming mainly from Perth) to *discover* the MRR's surfing attributes from 1960 onwards (see Figure 43) (Lyn and Moyle, 2014; McDonald-Lee, 2016). Most of these surfers were part of the newly affluent post-war youth culture who often drove from Perth for short stays or camping (McDonald-Lee, 2016; Sanders, 2006). A group of those surfers created one of the first surf organisations in WA (the West Coast Board Club) in the early 1960s which contributed to the popularity of the MRR beaches (McDonald-Lee, 2016). Many of the surfers that visited regularly the region decided to become residents in the MRR, often buying available affordable land left by WSLSS dairy farmers. For instance, Interviewee 4, a resident and former member of the AMR council, mentioned:

[M]y dad was a teenager, in the 60s, and he was coming down to Margaret River as a young surfer and it was not long before him and his mates decided to stay. And what they found was that Margaret River was a really dead town. In fact, it was a dying town. So there really were not many people living there, the agricultural industry was not really flourishing, they were desperate for people to stay, property was extremely cheap, and there was not a lot of (...) vibrancy (...). The young fellows discovered waves and they started surfing and that really started to build a whole different community in Margaret River. So by the 70s and 80s is when the surfers were moving down (...) then it was an interesting cultural clash between the farmers and the surfers (...)

[Interviewee 4, March 2022]

Similarly, another resident and local environmentalist (Interviewee 22) indicated that:

[T]he tourism industry (...) started down here when surfing took off in the 60s. So before the 60s, it was a relatively quiet town, it was really just a farming community down here. My family came up as part of the surfing kind of community that moves from Perth all the way down to Margaret River. There is a massive amount of people that moved down in the 70s and 80s for that reason (...)

[Interviewee 22, March 2021]





Figure 43: West Coast Board Club in Yallingup in 1960, McDonald-Lee (2016 picture taken by John Budge)

Compared to the previous phase, during the 1960s and 1970s sun and surfing attracted surfers from other areas (mainly Perth) who became regular visitors (Cresswell, 2003; Shire of Augusta Margaret River, 2022). Likewise, the conditions during this time allowed many of them to become residents and encourage the development and popularity of surfing in the region. However, the city surfers were not the only group in the new influx of visitors as described below.

#### 6.4.2.3. Emergence of an art scene in the region

In a similar context as the city surfers, members of various countercultural movements such as *hippies* and *orange people* (people inspired by Indian mystic Osho) also moved to permanent places near beaches. As well as many city surfers, during the 1960s and 1970s they took advantage of the affordable remaining old properties from the post-war settlements (see Figure 44) (Jones et al., 2019; Nicholls, 1966; Sanders, 2006). In that regard, Interviewee 3, an independent academic, commented that:

[S]urfers started really coming to Margaret River intensively in the 70s. All 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.

[Interviewee 3, February 2021]

Likewise, those properties were also targeted by creative entrepreneurs and artists (Jones et al., 2019; Sanders, 2006) as also described by another independent academic (Interviewee 11):

[D]ue to its past of being a hippie and surfer hotspot, a lot of creative people came into the region in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. And still today, there's a lot of an art scene. They do quite a few festivals, music festivals. They have opened galleries where you would never imagine that they could be, somewhere in the forest and stuff like that (...) There's a big creative scene in a very rural region (...)

[Interviewee 11, February 2021]

The wave of alternative lifestylers arriving to the MRR contributed to the creation of small art and craft shops, but more importantly as highlighted by Sanders (2006), many of these new lifestylers imported a different cultural and environmental perspective in opposition to the still existing frontier ideology.



Figure 44: The McDermott family and their cottage, King (2016, online)



As noted, there is not a clear division between surfers, hippies, artists, and creative entrepreneurs. In fact, many historical sources refer to all of them as part of the *new influx* that came to the MRR. However, in a different context, another type of entrepreneurs decided to invest in the region's viticulture potential.

#### 6.4.2.4. Emergence of the local wine industry

During the 1960s, as international traveling was on the rise, people in Perth and nearby cities were more exposed to European culinary traditions which included pairing meals with table wines (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017). Nonetheless, viticulture did not become an important part of the MRR's economic landscape until a contingent set of events took place in WA prior to 1966. Those events were the following:

- Change in the demand of wine from fortified to table wines;
- Low productivity of the Swan Valley (important wine region near Perth) due to soil conditions, unavailability of adequate soils for planting new vine varieties, and urban pressure;
- Recommendations from Dr Harold Olmo (a guest viticulturist from California) to search for suitable areas in the south of Perth; and
- Lobbies from WA wine entrepreneurs (for instance, Jack Mann, a wine entrepreneur in Perth) to establish a new wine valley in the Southwest area (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017; Sanders, 2006, 2004).

While these events did not directly aim to start viticulture and wine industries in the MRR, they brought WA authorities' attention to the need to diversify agriculture in rural southwest lands. Still, these events laid the grounds for the wine industry in the MRR.

Informed by Dr Olmo's and Slate's (a public servant at the Ministry of Industrial Development) reports, Dr John Gladstones (a WA agronomist) released a report in 1965 and a research paper in 1966 indicating that the MRR soil with good drainage was suitable for viticulture (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017; Lacorde, 2019). Such a *discovery* triggered the attention of several venturers, mainly doctors, who invested in vineyards after a community meeting in Busselton in the same year in which Dr

Gladstones also participated (Sanders, 2006). The impoverishment that most of the region was experiencing in the 1950s and early 1960s favoured the engagement with this new industry (Sanders, 2006; Thompson, 2015). In 1967 the first vines were planted, starting with Vasse Felix (Figure 45), and followed by Moss Wood in 1969, Cape Mentelle in 1970, Cullen in 1971, Sandalford in 1972, and Leeuwin State, Woodlands, and Wright in 1973 (MRWIA, 2020). Among the entrepreneurs, there were investors from the Swan Valley (Evans & Tate and Sandalford) as well as local farmers that diversified into viticulture. To establish this new industry, wine entrepreneurs purchased hectares of available land (former dairy land) to plant vineyards which contributed to shape the region's landscape and economy. As described by Interviewee 15, a surfing pioneer in the region:

[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 [the MRR] was a farming community. But then, all of a sudden, all the paddocks were being sold, cows were gone and vineyards everywhere.

[Interviewee 15, March 2021]



Figure 45: Tom Cullity with the first Vasse Felix vines in 1967, Prestipino (2017, online)

Compared to the previous niches, the wine industry in the MRR took some years to engage with tourism. It was only in the late 1970s that a local winery, Gralyn Estate, opened an art gallery in 1978 and the first cellar door in 1979 (Brearley, 2022; Sanders, 2006). A couple of years later, Cullen Wines opened one of the first restaurants within a winery (Sanders, 2006). By the end of the 1970s there were already 19 wineries in the region (Forrestal and Jordan, 2017; Thompson, 2015). It is possible to notice that during this phase the links between wine and tourism were at best incipient, although promising. As Interviewee 2, an independent academic, indicated:

[M]ost of what can be cleared for agriculture [land] has been [already] cleared. It used to be dairy farms, and now (...) you have wineries rather than dairy, then you have more potential for tourism, because you can bring more people to a winery, especially if it's associated with cellar doors, cellar sales and restaurants, than you can if you've got a dairy industry (...)

[Interviewee 2, March 2021]

Yet, there was not a clear picture of the impact which the emerging wine industry was to have on the unstable cave-focused tourism regime in the MRR. To close this phase, it is possible to notice that the emergence of each niche was the result of particular multi-scalar, and diverse landscape pressures and a relative absent incumbency from the regime actors. In fact, there was an apparent passivity of the regime that allowed the niches to unfold in the region in an unnoticeable manner. Geels (2004a, p. 40) referred to this pattern in niches' emergence as "smoulder below the surface". This could be related to low threat that the niches represented. Indeed, niches such as coastal developments and surfing contributed to bringing more visitors to the region since their emergence. However, during this phase the regime remained attached to the caves, although it was already showing some signs of destabilisation due to landscape pressures. All in all, it was possible to notice a symbiotic relationship between the existing cave-focused tourism regime with the emerging, though incipient, niches – a general feature of this initial phase (see, for instance, Geels, 2005a). In the 1980s, an increasing demand for new tourism experiences and particular events created windows of opportunity for the niches, especially surfing and the wine industry, to make a breakthrough into the regime. Such processes dramatically transformed the destination, changing the regime rules and relegating the caves to be a small part of a wider set of attractions.

#### 6.4.3. Phase two: Breakthrough into tourism (1980s)

During the 1980s the MRR as a tourist destination witnessed the breakthrough of emerging niches, especially surfing and the local wine industry. As Thompson (2015, p. 117) mentioned “the introduction of viticulture, in conjunction with the rising popularity of surfing, was the catalyst that changed the region’s development.” Indeed, the events during this phase reconfigured the tourist destination. But before focusing on the niches, it is necessary to elaborate the landscape and regime context.

At the landscape level, the main events influencing the niches and regime were the proliferation of neoliberal policies that encouraged open markets and lower public intervention (Harvey, 2007). Likewise, the 1980s saw the emergence of global sustainability frameworks together with global and national environmentalist and social justice movements. For instance, in 1987 the UN published *Our Common Future* (see Chapter 2), defining sustainable development as a global framework towards sustainability (WCED, 1990). In a similar vein, during the early 1980s green parties started achieving popularity and success in Australia (Robin and Griffiths, 2004). However, this global sustainability landscape does not seem to have exercised strong pressure on the regime during this phase. At the regime level, the caves were still an important tourism resource during this decade. For instance, only Jewel Cave was receiving 40,000 visitors per year (Canberra Times, 1987). Yet, the increasing number of visitors interested in sun and surfing, and wineries would disrupt an already unstable regime. In the following years other niches received more attention and became part of the new regime, in particular due to their impact on the image and attractiveness of the MRR.

##### 6.4.3.1. Breakthrough of surfing (and coastal holiday towns)

During the 1980s, as more city surfers visited the region, local surfing events began to take place at some of the popular surfing spots such as Yallingup and Smiths beaches (see Lyn and Moyle, 2014). Meanwhile, former city surfers that already resided in the region began to open surf clothing and supply shops, contributing to the region’s attractiveness for visiting surfers (Thompson, 2015). These continuous local surfing initiatives soon created the conditions for the first international

professional competition to take place in the MRR in 1985: the Margaret River Thriller (Augusta-Margaret River Mail, 2015; Cresswell, 2003; Lyn and Moyle, 2014; Sanders, 2006). This international event continued every year, contributing to the popularity of the MRR as a surfing region (Figure 46). This scenario was soon leveraged by local surfers who began to offer *surfaris* (tours organised by local surfers to little known beaches) (Canberra Times, 1988). Interviewee 25, a resident and member of a local conservation group, described the impact of international surfing competitions:

[S]urfing has morphed from being a pastime that a few hardy individuals enjoyed into an international phenomenon. The coast between the two lighthouses (Leeuwin and Naturaliste) experiences some of the world's most consistent and large wave formations (...) this southern stretch of Australia is continually subjected to a range of wave types. As a result, the world surfing fraternity had chosen Surfers Point at Prevelly for the venue of one of its international surfing competitions. This fact has meant that the Capes Region (the MRR) has been featured on TV around the world.

[Interviewee 25, written, June 2021]



Figure 46: Screenshot of video of Margaret River Thriller 1987, VHS Surf Vault (2022, online)

As beaches became more popular and more city-surfers were visiting the region, the holiday coastal towns that developed in the previous decades began to receive more attention and in the 1980s they became an important part of the destination image. Sanders (2006, 2000) indicates that by the end of the 1980s most coastal holiday residences were owned by one family and occupied less than 15 weeks per year. During the 1980s the region became more attractive for city surfers and, more importantly, began to export a new image internationally of a region with new surfing spots, coastal holiday houses to purchase, and a vibrant lifestyle. In other words, the breakthrough of surfing contributed to popularising the MRR as a beach destination.

#### 6.4.3.2. Breakthrough of wine-tourism

During the 1980s the number of local wineries increased up to 43, many of them earning medals and awards due to their quality (Sanders, 2004; Thompson, 2015). Vasse Felix, Cullen Wines, Leeuwin Estate, Moss Wood, Cape Mentelle, and Redbrook were among the main wineries that received national and international recognition for the quality of their wines (Cresswell, 2003; Dear, 1988; Hanley, 1982; Hoad, 1984; Perkin, 1986). As such, they became attractive to visitors, which led to the opening of more tourist facilities in many of the wineries (Cresswell, 2003; Sanders, 2004; Thompson, 2015; Whyte, 2009). For instance, following the steps taken by Gralyn Estate and Cullen Wines, Vasse Felix would open a restaurant with capacity for 75 people in 1988 (Whyte, 2009). Likewise, some wineries would also include art galleries on their premises (Cresswell, 2003; Whyte, 2009).

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 (see Figure 47 and 48) (Caccetta, 2014; Hoad, 1984). This event is considered to have drawn international attention to the MRR's natural beauty and has continued every year since (except for 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19). After this successful concert, Leeuwin Estate decided to organise a similar one every year. For instance, the Berlin Statskapelle Orchestra performed in 1986, the Royal Danish Orchestra the next year, and Ray Charles with the WA Symphony Orchestra in 1988 (Cresswell, 2003). As such, the 1985 concert became a pivotal historical event in the development of wine-tourism and the internationalisation of the MRR as



a tourist destination based on wine. Interviewee 38, a representative of a regional authority, 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 and that has continued on till today. The Leeuwin Estate winery has had a number of major well-known international acts performing there, which all draws attention to, of course, the Margaret River wine region.

[Interviewee 38, February 2021]



Figure 47: First Leeuwin Estate concert, Stevenson, Kinder & Scott Corporate Photography (1985, online)



*Figure 48: First Leeuwin Estate concert, Stevenson, Kinder & Scott Corporate Photography (1985, online)*

Following those concerts, the region witnessed the proliferation of local wine tasting, coach tours to cellar doors, and restaurants located at the vineyards (Cresswell, 2003; Dear, 1988; Whyte, 2009). The thriving wine and wine-tourism industries were also becoming an important regional economic driver as they provided jobs that were mainly taken by surfers and new lifestylers who had come to the MRR in the previous decades (Sanders, 2006; Thompson, 2015). As Interviewee 13 mentioned:

[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, [it] 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 in the map (...) [and] it has created jobs and opportunities.

[Interviewee 13, April 2021]

As well as surfing, wine-tourism changed drastically the destination image. Indeed, by the end of the 1980s the MRR became internationally known as a wine and beach destination which attracts more interstate and international visitors and investment. For instance, Cresswell (2003) reported that in the late 1980s the number of



accommodation establishments, including chalets, premium hotels, and caravan parks, multiplied mainly as a result of wine-tourism. By the same token, coastal holiday towns experienced a higher demand during this decade which could be related to surfing and the increasing popularity of the MRR's beaches. In turn, arts and crafts businesses increased in the 1980s as a result of the continuous influx of artists and alternative lifestylers (Cresswell, 2003). Nevertheless, it is remarkable that in comparison with the rest of niches, the local wine industry was being recognised as a regional economic driver.

In summary, during this phase it was possible to notice important patterns in the destination. For instance, the breakthrough of surfing and wine-tourism allowed them to co-exist with the existing cave-focused tourism. While these two niches did not properly compete with the regime, their influence on the destination relegated the interest in the caves to a secondary position as indicated by Interviewees 4, 6, 10 and 11. Another important feature of this phase was the change of the destination image at the international level. It is possible to infer that there is a direct relation between the regime rules and the destination image, although at this point it requires further investigation. Likewise, during this phase, surfing and wine-tourism exhibited more structuration as they had a larger network of social actors and, as in the case of wine-tourism, hard institutions were created such as the Margaret River Grape Growers and Wine Producers. As Fuenfschilling and Truffer (2014) indicated, hard institutions are an indicator of higher levels of structuration. Other evidence of such structuration process are the major international events that took place from 1985 onwards and the emerging related businesses as well. This is a typical pattern exhibited by niches that are reaching the regime level (Derwort et al., 2021; Geels, 2005a; Geels and Schot, 2007). Nonetheless, local tourism bodies remained focused on the promotion and conservation of caves during this phase (Cresswell, 2003). The latter demonstrates that the tourism regime exhibited some persistent patterns (the caves), as often noted in various other regimes (Geels and Raven, 2006; Grin, 2016). The particular co-existence of sun and surfing-tourism, wine-tourism, and the – unstable but persistent – cave-focused regime continued after this decade, leading to a whole regime reconfiguration.

#### 6.4.4. Phase three: Gradual rearrangement of the regime (1990s)

The 1990s witnessed the consolidation of wine-tourism and surfing as pillars of tourism and the relegation of cave-tourism in the region. Evidently, this rearrangement did not mean that the caves in the region were no longer popular, but that the wine-tourism and sun and surfing-tourism became a pivotal part of the destination image and, in turn, of the new tourism sociotechnical regime. In terms of the landscape, it is possible to notice the prevalence and strengthening of neoliberalism worldwide and a positive economic performance of WA economy based on mining and agriculture (see Department of Treasury and Finance, 2004). As such, the MRR became an important destination for visitors but also for tourism investment, mainly driven by the region's wine and surf popularity.

Indeed, the increasing popularity of the region attracted private investment in luxury accommodation and wine-tourism businesses during the 1990s (Canberra Times, 1993; Carthew, 1999; O'Brien, 1996; Petkanas et al., 1997; Pownall, 1999). Wineries also received financial support from the WA government that was invested in wine-tourism (see WA Government, 1998). As a result, more wineries opened tourism facilities, which promoted the emergence of gourmet food as another popular experience for visitors (Carthew, 1999; Carthew and Mannion, 1999; Foster, 1992a; Petkanas et al., 1997). According to Carlsen and Getz (2006), a milestone in the development of wine-tourism in the region was the Margaret River Wine Region Festival that started in 1990 as a domestic event that quickly achieved popularity and began reaching an international audience. This festival did not only showcase the region's acclaimed wines but also promoted related sectors, including restaurants, galleries, breweries, as well as community-led initiatives. Another milestone was the collaboration between local DMOs and the Margaret River Wine Industry Association to produce tourist guides showcasing cellar-doors and restaurants (Carthew and Mannion, 1999). Wine-tourism saw its first victory against incompatible industries during this decade when a quarry was rejected in Busselton after a six-month legal fight (Zekulich, 1998). The most important outcome of wine-tourism development during this decade was its consolidation as the main economic driver in the region.

This consolidation was reinforced by the successful development of other compatible sectors such as luxury accommodation and restaurants (Anderson, 1998; McIlwraith, 1999; Rechichi, 1999). By the end of this decade there were already mentions of a tourism boom (Rechichi, 1999). As a response to the fast development of tourism and wine-tourism, the AMR local government introduced a rural strategy to avoid potential land-use conflicts between future tourism development proposals and other economic activities, mainly conventional agriculture (O'Neill, 1991). In fact, important regional winemakers were already suggesting that future regional strategic planning should be worked by local and WA planning authorities together with wineries and tourist infrastructure providers (Cowan, 1998; Ozich, 1998). Wine-tourism was becoming pivotal not only as an economic driver but also as an important consideration in land management policies.

While it is true that wine tourism received more attention from media and tourism bodies, surfing and the popularity of the MRR as a beach destination also progressed during this decade and brought several international events. Indeed, following the success of Margaret Thriller in 1985, several more events sponsored by global companies such as Coca-Cola and Quicksilver contributed to evolution of the MRR as an international surfing, and more importantly, a beach destination (Augusta-Margaret River Mail, 2015; Malpeli, 1999). However, wine-tourism had more attention because it promoted the development of more sectors than surfing. Still, both managed to develop successfully without affecting each other. The caves in the region maintained their role as the main natural attraction in the region under the management of local DMOs and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (see Townsend and Spencer, 1998). Likewise, the region's forests, in particular the LNNP, also became an important natural attraction as a result of more public attention to nature-based tourism (Sanders, 1999). By the end of the 1990s, 72 tour operators were working in the LNNP and activities such as bushwalking and hiking were rising in popularity in the region (Sanders, 1999). While the caves still had a relevant role, they had become part of the region's nature-based tourism.

By the end of the 1990s the region was completely different from what it was at the beginning of this transition in the late 1950s. Wine-tourism and surfing (including beach-related recreational activities) relegated cave-tourism which is now part of an

incipient nature-based tourism range of attractions. This process exhibited patterns similar to those described by Geels (2004a) such as new regime elements leading incremental innovation (for instance, wine-tourism promoting related industries), new networks of actors becoming part of the regime (for instance, the Margaret River Wine Industry Association), and persistent routines related to vested interests (for instance, local DMOs) continuing to promote the regional caves. This phase tended to follow a gradual fashion as the regime consolidated (Geels, 2004). In that sense, the next chapter focuses on the recent historical development of the resulting regime. All in all, this transition reflects the complex relationships taking place in a destination including contingent events at multiple scales, and agency to promote new industries in the region with unexpected results. The next subsection uses insights from the MLP and path-dependence theory to order this complex transition. Figure 49 summarises the three phases.

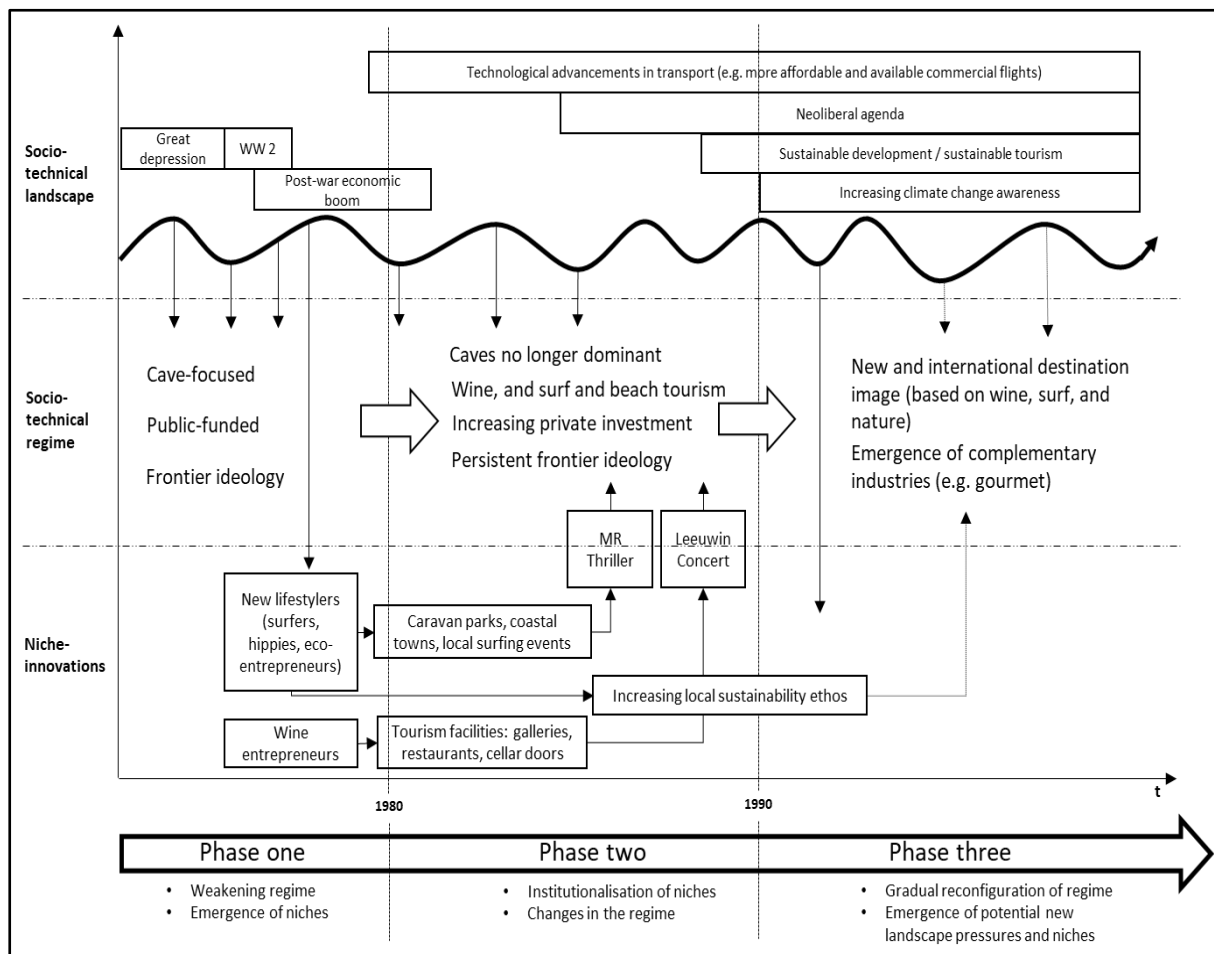


Figure 49: Historical transition in tourism in the MRR, adapted from Derwort et al. (2021, p. 689, figure 8)

## **6.5. Understanding the first transition in the destination**

This subsection analyses the transition phases explained previously in order to determine, first, the type of transition trajectory that the destination followed, second, the mechanisms through which the regime escaped the lock-in process noted in subsection 6.3, and third, the elements that caused a path-creation process in the destination.

### **6.5.1. Typology of transition pathways**

Path-dependence theory claims that at every point of a path's history there are multiple trajectories, some more likely to happen than others due to past and current conditions of the path in question (Martin and Sunley, 2006). In the case of the MRR as a tourist destination, this implies that there were a number of different trajectories that the destination could have followed at any particular point in its history.

Therefore, to understand the reasons behind the particular trajectory depicted in the aforementioned phases it is necessary to conceptualise it. A useful framework is Geels and Schott's (2007) typology which identifies five possible transition pathways (reproduction, transformation, de-/re-alignment, substitution, and reconfiguration) (see also Grin, 2016). To determine the typology of transition pathways it is necessary to specify the timing and nature of the interactions between the three analytical levels of the MLP. The former refers to the degree of development of the niches by the time landscape forces opened windows of opportunity in the dominant regime. In turn, the latter refers to the type of relations between the regime and landscape (reinforcing or disruptive) and the regime and niches (competitive or symbiotic) (see Chapter 4 for details).

Regarding the timing, it is possible to notice that when surfing and wine-tourism entered the regime level in phase 2, neither was fully developed according to the descriptors indicated by Geels and Schott (2007, p. 405) (see also Chapter 4). For instance, by the end of phase one none of the emerged niches had developed an important actor network, infrastructure, and recognition. The window of opportunity was the period of instability that the regime was experiencing amid an increasing visitors demand for new experiences that peaked during the 1980s. Therefore, this subsection argues that niches were not fully developed when the window of

opportunity opened. Regarding the nature of interactions, it is possible to suggest that the regime was disrupted by the various influential and multi-scalar events and processes that took place at the landscape level, including WWII, the post-WWII economic boom, the relocation of local dairy industry, technological developments in air transport, an increase in usage of cars and caravans, and increasing national demand for table wine. In that sense, the landscape-regime nature falls into the *disruptive* category.

In turn, as clearly stated in the previous subsection, the regime had a symbiotic relation with the emerging niches, rather than competitive, as surfing and wine-tourism (and the art scene too to some extent) kept bringing visitors to the region. Now, considering that the destination was struggling to bring visitors during the 1950s and was being disrupted by constant landscape pressures, it is logical that the niches were seen as a solution to solve this visitation problem. As the niches were adopted by the regime as a solution in a gradual fashion and that took almost four decades, a series of changes within the regime began to happen. The arrival of surfing and wine-tourism provoked a massive reconfiguration of the once dominating cave-focused tourism sociotechnical regime in the MRR. As described by Geels and Schot (2007, p. 411), the adopted niches have the potential to “lead to technical changes or changes in user practices, perceptions, and search heuristics”. In fact, the most noticeable direct evidence of the regime reconfiguration was the change of the destination image at the domestic and international level. While the MRR was still known for its beautiful caves, the main elements shaping the destination image were wine-tourism and surfing. Both contributed to popularising of the MRR as an international wine-tourism and beach destination respectively.

In that sense, the tourism transition path in the MRR has common features with three types of trajectories: re-/de-alignment, transformation, and reconfiguration. Geels and Schot (2007) mention that when landscape forces are disruptive, as the transition addressed in this chapter, it is possible to have more than one type of transition pathway. For instance, during phase one there were multiple niches that were not fully-developed and could have competed to replace the cave-focused regime if it had been in a “hollowing out” process (see Geels and Schot, 2007, p. 408). Nonetheless, despite the struggles of the cave-focused regime, there was no

vacuum at the regime level as the re-/de- alignment pathway suggests. On the contrary, the cave-focused regime was eager to solve its problems and, as a result, it began to encompass additional elements to the caves such as forests and coastline. However, the landscape forces favoured demand for other tourism activities such as surfing and wine-tourism which pushed the regime to maintain a passive co-existence with surfing and wine-tourism. Hence, phase two exhibits patterns of the transformation pathway. Nonetheless, as the new member of the regime led to further adjustments of the regime by means of changing the destination image, providing new related experiences, blocking incompatible industries, and fostering incremental novelty, the type of trajectory followed by the MRR during the last phase of the transition was a reconfiguration pathway. In summary, the transition pathway in the MRR described in section 6.4. started as a re-/de- alignment pathway, continued as transformation pathway, and finalised as a reconfiguration pathway. Reconfiguration pathways tend to occur after a transformation phase as a result of the influence of the adopted niches on the regime. That influence can be a result of the agency of the incumbent and niche actors as well as other factors. It is therefore important to explore elements such as agency and place-specific factors as they had an important role in the transition.

#### 6.5.2. Agency and place-specific factors

Considering that niches allow the actors to deviate from the regime structure (Geels, 2006), the reconfiguration of a regime as a result of a transition is an expression of path-creation. As Garud and Karnøe (2001) mentioned, path-creation is the result of a process of mindful deviation (see also Schienstock, 2007). As noted in the breakthrough phase in the previous subsection, actors within the niches understood the potential opportunities that tourism could provide, and therefore chose to promote a stronger interaction with tourism. While the emergence of those niches did not have a clear intention to become part of the regime, the later phases exhibited some purposeful agency. In addition to the actors within the niches, actors within the declining cave-focused regime saw the potential of the emerging niches and did not block their development, but instead gave the conditions for a synergic coexistence. In general terms, as described by Grillitsch and Sotarauta (2020, p. 706), “regional paths emerge due to the intertwining of a whole range of actions, and intended and unintended results of them”. Nonetheless, although agency is an important element

to consider, pre-existing place-specific factors are also relevant as argued by Martin (2010). Here is where the pre-transition phase comes to relevance as it provides an empirical example of those pre-existing place-specific factors. Indeed, the emergence and posterior breakthrough of surfing and wine-tourism were not only influenced by the actors involved in each niche but also, by the events and knowledge accumulated in the pre-transition phase. This way, an EEG-informed MLP allows the analysis to minimise the role of contingency and to highlight that of place and agency.

By the same token, Grillitsch and Sotarauta (2020) argue that the role of agency in path-creation processes responds to place-specific factors (see also Chapter 4). The authors suggest that under specific opportunities the interrelation between three types of agency can lead to regional (or destination) path-creation. Those types of agency are (i) innovative entrepreneurship, a driving force that aims to break with embedded routines by means of *thinking outside the box*; (ii) institutional entrepreneurship, a supportive element for the emergence, development, and success of innovative entrepreneurs; and (iii) place-based leadership, a powerful force able to construct a common vision among heterogeneous actors and networks in order to promote regional change; all of which can be identified in the transition phases in section 6.4. For instance, due to landscape pressures, the institutions allowed the empowerment of private tourism firms. This is evidenced in the Tourist Act of 1973 and the following ones that incorporated tourism stakeholders of the private sector in the Tourism Council, and in the major relevance of the local DMOs. A supportive scenario for private entrepreneurs allowed the emergence and development of innovative entrepreneurship to notice opportunities generated by other tourism resources, such as coastline and surfing spots, or diversifying into tourism (for instance, wine tourism). Place-based leadership was the key factor fostering a common vision for the development of surfing and wine-tourism. In the case of surfing the leaders in the development of surfing in the region were the first city surfers who became residents. In the case of wine-tourism as discussed in subsection 6.4.3.2, Leeuwin Estate was the leading actor who manifested its innovative entrepreneurship by organising the first Leeuwin Estate Concert. Nevertheless, it is important to remark the role of pre-existing place-specific



elements which informed and enabled each of the agency types that influenced the transition in the region.

Path-creation processes are not sudden breaks from former paths. Mindful deviation implies that actors embedded in a previous path promote a new trajectory that requires new institutional and social arrangements (Garud et al., 2010; Garud and Karnøe, 2001). Nonetheless, an important feature exhibited by the path-creation process in the MRR is that the main actors and the key knowledge came from outside the destination. City surfers coming from Perth were essential to the success and popularity of the MRR as a surfing destination. In the same vein, wine entrepreneurs mainly coming from the Swan Valley were pivotal in the emergence of a wine industry in the region. Considering that before the transition began the destination was exhibiting a potential lock-in (see section 6.2), one of the main mechanisms to escape such lock-in in this case was a mixture of transplantation and diversification into related industries (see Martin and Sunley, 2006, p. 420). The former is related to the fact that the knowledge, experience, routines, and actors that played in the emergence and development of the niches came from an external location (mainly Perth). Trippi et al. (2018) argue that the arrival of new actors, knowledge and networks are able to create new paths in peripheral areas. The latter responds to the way niches utilised the existing core structure of the decaying regime; accommodation, transportation, booking, and some local routines provided a basis for the successful development of surfing and wine-tourism.

While the resulting destination after the transition is diverse, strong, and attractive, it is important to consider that every successful path carries the “seed of its own destruction” as they are constantly undergoing selection forces (Glückler, 2010, p. 400). Future landscape pressures could disrupt or reinforce the new regime, leading to an emergence or avoidance of potentially beneficial niches, and many tourism destinations have been close to decline due to failures to adequately respond to the problems mass tourism generates (see, for instance, Borg, 2022; Carson et al., 2014; González, 2018). The internal forces reinforcing and reproducing the regime rules are also worth considering in the posterior development of the new wine- and surf-based destination. As Martin and Sunley (2006, p. 408) noted, “processes of path-destruction (path-dissolution) and new path-creation are always latent in the

process of path dependence". The following chapter elaborates this point in more detail.

## **6.6. Summary and conclusions**

This chapter has analysed the historical development of the MRR as a tourist destination using a combined EEG / MLP framework. As such, it provided a historical analysis of the destination from its emergence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. First, this chapter focused on the historical evolution of tourism in the MRR since its emergence until 1950s. This analysis allowed the chapter to conceptualise the tourism sociotechnical regime operating in the region with certain stability (section 6.3). Section 6.4. examined the historical transition that took place at the destination. This historical transition is key as it demonstrates the complex transformation behind the MRR's current tourism regime. It took four decades for the MRR tourism industry to escape from a potential lock-in process focused on cave-tourism and to become a popular wine and beach destination.

This chapter operationalised the EEG / MLP framework to understand a historical transition in tourism. The applicability of this framework constitutes a theoretical contribution to the MLP analysis as by means of adding an EEG perspective (especially path-dependence) it is able to address the following:

- The path-dependence process behind the formation of the cave-focused tourism regime,
- The multiple and complex interactions between regime, niche, and landscape levels during a path-shaping process,
- The identification of transition pathways, sources of path-creation, types of agency, and the role of place-specific factors

In turn, this combined framework contributes to improving the EEG's understanding of the evolution of tourist destination as the MLP's analytical level provide a stronger lens through which analyse the role of agency.

Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, Chapter 6 partially contributes to answer the third and fourth research questions. On the one hand, this chapter argues that

the tourism in the MRR followed a path-dependent process until the 1950s when a path-shaping process took place. Plus, considering that the caves are still present in the current tourism sociotechnical regime, this chapter has demonstrated that the caves are a persistent element in the tourism industry in the MRR and could potentially become an example of positive lock-in (see Ma and Hassink, 2013). On the other hand, this chapter has explained in-detail a path-shaping process that reconfigured the entire destination. A particular factor were the new visitors and residents that arrived the region during the historical transition as they influenced a new ethos. An ethos more aligned with sustainability. However, by the end of this transition, sustainable development and sustainable tourism as global and local policy frameworks and urging aims were still incipient (see Hardy et al., 2002). Therefore, this chapter has explained the conformation of the current tourism regime in the MRR which, as other regimes, is affected by new or persistent landscape and niche pressures. The next chapter focuses on the new regime.

## Chapter 7.

### The MRR and the need for a sustainability transition in tourism

*“If we have too much development, and we become overdeveloped, then we lose the golden goose”*

*(Interviewee 51)*

#### 7.1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the MRR as a tourist destination until the end of the 1990s. This chapter focuses on the destination that resulted from that transition. Currently, the MRR is a popular wine and beach destination that is increasingly visited by domestic and international tourists each year. As discussed in Chapter 3, destinations benefit from the economic benefits of tourism and, at the same time, struggle with the social, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism. Chapter 3 also indicated that one of the main strategies to adequately balance the impacts tourism is sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is an objective followed by various destinations worldwide, and the MRR is no stranger to that endeavour. In that sense, this chapter analyses the MRR as a tourist destination in order to determine the challenges to the tourism industry in the destination and the emerging sustainability-related responses. Therefore, this chapter provides a direct answer to the first research question. The analysis of the challenges and responses can provide an approximation to how sustainable the tourism industry in the MRR is.

While extant literature on tourism sustainability has proposed several related quantitative indicators (see, for instance, Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; UNWTO, 2004), it is important to acknowledge that the availability of information is a constant caveat in many destinations. The MRR is not strange to that issue, especially considering that the destination is composed by two LGAs (see Thompson, 2015). In that sense, this chapter identifies and analyses the challenges (section 7.2) and sustainability initiatives (section 7.3) taking place at the destination. By means of analysing and comparing both, this chapter aims to identify if a sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR is taking place. The findings and conclusions of this chapter (section 7.4) will be useful for Chapter 8. The impact of COVID-19 is not considered in this chapter as it is treated separately in Chapter 8.

## 7.2. Challenges to the tourism industry in the MRR

Sustainable tourism is indeed a highly contested and complex issue to discuss as it encompasses various perspectives, interests, and motivations. For instance, the interview analysis did not determine a clear pattern regarding the sustainability of the MRR as a tourist destination. While a number of interviews emphatically stated that the destination is not sustainable, other interviewees were optimistic and declared that the region is sustainable compared to other destinations or it is on the way to become sustainable. Interviewee 31, a representative of Tourism WA addressed such complexity:

[M]argaret River's tourism, I think, is sustainable in many respects. And I talk about that from an economic sustainable model at this stage. [However,] environmentally, it is a very tricky one because how do you keep tourism to have a light footprint without creating activities for people to do? So, I think environmentally it is a little more fragile. And socially, I believe Margaret River is certainly fragile because Margaret River is very much a single-economic income generator in that it is very dependent on the tourism industry.

[Interviewee 31, February 2021]

In Australia, tourism is considered as a key economic driver, but also an important contributor to natural and heritage conservation issues (Cresswell et al., 2021; WA Environmental Protection Authority, 2007). In the same vein, WA Environmental Protection Authority (2007) indicates that while tourism is a key factor for the State development, it is a climate-vulnerable industry and, therefore, requires urgent action as several communities and local businesses depend on it. As noted, tourism is understood as a key industry for WA and Australia that on the one hand puts pressure on the natural and cultural heritage and on the other hand is vulnerable to climate change. This complex nature of the tourism industry in Australia is obviously not strange for the area of study.

The tourism industry in the MRR depends directly on its local natural, cultural, and heritage resources; hence, any significant threat to these resources can represent a challenge to the industry. Yet, as several interviewees agreed, most of the challenges to the tourism industry in the MRR are a direct or indirect result of the same activity. In fact, while the interviewees acknowledged that tourism is an

important economic regional driver, they recognised that if the industry keeps its current trajectory, it would eventually “kill the golden goose” – in other words, deplete the region’s tourism resources (Interviewees 31 and 51). The interviewees identified various challenges that the tourism industry must overcome in order to survive while maintaining the natural environment and keeping a positive relationship with the host community including Aboriginal people. As Interviewee 7, an independent researcher, mentioned:

[T]he challenge in most locations in the MRR is to achieve a balance between attracting tourists to have the various nature-based experiences, but not to such an extent that the value of those experiences are lessened for those future tourists. Obviously, you want tourists to come for whatever reasons, but you don't want too many to come at one time, you don't want to exceed the capacity of the region to host those tourists (...)

[Interviewee 7, February 2021]

The interview analysis identified seven significant challenges at the destination that are addressed below.

#### 7.2.1. Pressures on sensitive coastal areas

The latest report on Australia’s state of the environment (Cresswell et al., 2021) argues that the impacts on Australian coastal environments appear to be worsening. The report identifies tourism as one of the factors causing negative impact on coastal areas, especially due to trampling, pollution, ecological degradation, erosion, disturbance of wildlife, and increased demand on local resources and infrastructure. At the State level, WA state of the environment report (WA Environmental Protection Authority, 2007) indicates that tourism development is also an important contributor to the degradation of coastal and marine environments. Clearly, coastal destinations in Australia and WA need to find an adequate balance between promoting tourism development and experiences and protecting vulnerable coastal and marine ecosystems. However, as noted in the MRR, achieving that balance is a complex challenge.

According to the interview analysis, the existing infrastructure in the region is insufficient for the number of visitors coming to the region, especially considering the efforts of the industry to attract more visitors (see section 7.2). As a result, there has been public and private investment to improve and built infrastructure in the region in

order to provide an adequate experience to the visitors (Albanese, 2009, see 2010; Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2019a, 2019a; Macri, 2008a). Nevertheless, according to the interviewees, the region requires further infrastructure in various areas ranging from cycling tourism to luxury accommodation. The latter has historically been a constant trigger for established residents who have witnessed the changes in the region's coastal landscape during the last three decades. According to Wesley et al. (2010), that is a common process in regional Australian coastal destinations. Nonetheless, in the MRR such transformation of the coastal landscape has led to a number of significant socioenvironmental conflicts. For instance, an independent academic (Interviewee 3) mentioned:

[Due to real estate development] you don't get to see the rural landscape anymore. And you don't get that rural character retained in the landscape. So that would be a bad case scenario. Also, if they [authorities] started approving high-end hotels on critical coastal landscapes, I would see that as an unsustainable and undesirable development. So whilst to hope for a more sustainable future, I'm not convinced that that's going to be the case.

[Interviewee 3, February 2021]

One of the most relevant cases is Smith's beach which has a long history full of controversies since 2000 (see Alana Buckley-Carr, 2006; Perpetch and Taylor, 2012; Wesley and Pforr, 2010). This project triggered a community response under the name Defend Smith's Beach which raised concern about the impact of a tourism project on the coastal landscape. While a luxury resort was built in 2007 despite resident's opposition (Interviewee 20; Interviewee 44; Wesley and Pforr, 2010), an attempt to build a larger luxury beach resort was prevented by local authorities. Recently, in 2021, a project to build a new resort hotel expanding the approved development area prompted the community to organise and protest against it under the name Save Smiths Beach Again (Figure 50) (Augusta-Margaret River Times, 2021; Dawson and Kirk, 2021; Save Smiths Beach Again, 2020). As Wesley et al. (2010, p. 787) indicated: "(...) Western Australia appears to be a long way from achieving the political change that is required to establish a process that achieves sustainable coastal tourism developments (...) the Smith's Beach case may continue to be replicated in other planning models across the state and beyond."



*Figure 50: Save Smith's Beach Again group demonstrating against new project, Dawson and Kirk (2021, online)*

Wesley et al. (2010) were not wrong as one decade later another coastal project triggered a new conflict. WA authorities approved a five-star hotel project in Gnarabup beach in 2020 amid residents' protests (Figure 51) and, according to Interviewee 37, a strong opposition from the local government. Despite the residents organised under the name Preserve Gnarabup Beach to advocate for the cancellation of the project, it was authorised by the WA state (see Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020a; de Kruijff, 2020a; Pancia, 2020; Rose, 2004). In fact, the WA Premier supported the project as it was supposed to create several jobs in the region (Stephens, 2020), despite its potential impact on the natural landscape and fire risks that the project could have, according to a representative of Preserve Gnarabup (Interviewee 22).





Figure 51: Demonstration against hotel project at Gnarabup beach, Hatley and Fletcher (2020, online)

The pressure on sensitive coastal areas due to tourism development represents a challenge to the tourism industry itself. Clearly, on the one hand, tourism development in coastal areas could become a significant pull-factor for visitors. On the other hand, the resulting socioenvironmental conflict damages the destination image and could be a deterrent for visitors. An important aspect of these conflicts is that the residents are not necessarily against these projects and instead request to have major involvement in the decision-making processes related to tourism infrastructure projects taking place in areas that they consider of high environmental and social value. As such, this challenge is about the environmental and sociocultural impacts of tourism.

#### 7.2.2. Disruption of local social fabric

Further to the economic benefits of tourism at the Federal level (without considering the period 2020 – 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic) (see for instance TRA, 2022) that have contributed to better infrastructure and accessibility to several destination, tourism has also led to detrimental effects for host communities. For instance, Konovalov (2016) identifies increased crime rates, disruption of place perception, reduced feeling of togetherness in the community, and limited access to local infrastructure as key negative impacts of tourism in tropical Australian

destinations in North Queensland. Similarly, Tovar et al. (2008) report that tourism in a destination located in Northwest Tasmania is associated with inappropriate behaviour, overcrowding of public facilities, and increases of the living cost. Despite both studies analyse destinations in different geographical contexts, they point out to similar social issues which are challenging to address given the economic relevance of tourism for those destinations. The MRR is also a witness to this complex social challenge.

The MRR is not seen as suffering from overtourism compared to similar coastal destinations such as the Gold Coast, Queensland or Bali, Indonesia. Still, it is concerning that residents have an increasing feeling of overcrowding during peak seasons and important events as beaches, shops, restaurants, housing and parking areas are taken over by visitors (Interviewees 3 and 15). The interviewees also expressed their concern that this situation might worsen as the destination receives more visitors every year without many improvements in infrastructure (see Figure 52). As Interviewee 17, a member of a local community organisation, mentioned:

[T]he town's centre is something that most of the locals do not identify anymore (...) because [it] is full of souvenir shops and real estate shops, so full of tourists and expensive cafés. There is a lot of social impact in that way, there is a divide, something seems to be for the tourists and other things for the local (...)

[Interviewee 17, March 2021]





*Figure 52: Carpark in Gracetown, The Margaret River region (2016 Photo taken by Christian Bishop)*

As tourism development continues to shape this dual place (an MRR for tourists and another MRR for residents), clashes between residents and visitors could generate a feeling of tourism-phobia and damage the destination image, as it has occurred in other destinations. While this issue is mostly reported in destinations with higher visitation levels than the MRR (see various entries in Stoffelen et al., 2022), it is possible to notice early symptoms of overtourism. Interviewee 32, a tourism consultant in the MRR, reported that:

[I] really know that some residents are not happy with tourism-based operators like Airbnb operators. They're not necessarily happy with that because of noise [and] too many people (...) staying in one household over a day or two, not really respecting local residents, the way of their life (...)

[Interviewee 32, March 2021]

Clearly, addressing this challenge requires a focus on the sociocultural impacts of tourism at the destination and represent a call to urban and rural planners to prevent the emergence of an MRR for tourists and another one for residents.

### 7.2.3. Scarce housing and shortage of staff

By 2010, housing was already considered an important challenge for Australia, especially due to a short supply of land for housing, bureaucracy, shortage of skilled workers in the construction sector, and lack of coordination between urban planning and housing suppliers (Thomas and Hicks, 2010). Clearly, the housing problem tends to worsen due to economic changes at the global level such as economic crisis or, as it has been happening in destinations worldwide, the strongly positioning of short-rental accommodation (see for instance Sherwood, 2019; Pforr et al., 2021). Globally, residents' organisations have begun to complain about the impact of short-rental accommodations on housing availability and gentrification (Sherwood, 2019). The housing and short-rental accommodation issues are having a detrimental impact on WA. For instance, Turner (2022) talks about a chick-and-egg problem as the reduced supply of housing has become a deterrent to workers – many of them in the construction sector. However, this problem is not only within the construction sector as hospitality workers are also dependent on the availability of affordable housing. This challenge is even more difficult for destinations that heavily rely on transient workers such as the MRR.

Housing and staffing are complex and urgent challenges for the MRR. It is an ongoing problem that predates the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, there has been a shortage of staff related to the decreasing availability of affordable long-term housing mainly that is, in turn, driven by the proliferation of short-stay accommodation and holiday homes. As Interviewee 46, a wine-tourism facility manager, mentioned:

[T]he rental crisis is another major one (...) there is very little [long-term] rental accommodation (...) So, there's been a lot of people flipping properties and putting rents up because they can get them there. The housing market [in the MRR] is out of control. People are buying houses, hundreds of thousands above their actual value (...) [this scenario is] unseen in other parts of Australia (...)

[Interviewee 46, April 2021]

In the same vein, Interviewee 41 described the relation between unavailable affordable housing and workers:

[I] think there's probably two main challenges [for the tourism industry] and that's staff being able to get hired (...) and then, even if they can potentially locate certain staff (...) they find it extremely difficult to find them near accommodation to stay (...)

[Interviewee 41, May 2021]

Brennan (2014) already raised flags about the housing market in the region. His report indicated that there was a shortage of low-price and public housing in the MRR. More recently, Godden (2021) reported a residential vacancy rate of 0.2% in Augusta – Margaret River (AMR) with a direct impact on the availability of workers for hospitality and agriculture. The scenario is not different in Busselton where several workers have been filling up caravan parks originally planned for visitors (Kirk, 2021a; Murphy and Loney, 2022).

According to the interviewees, this challenge is directly linked to the increasing popularity of the MRR as a tourism destination. In effect, the attractiveness of the region has convinced several visitors to buy holiday houses which most of the time remain empty. Similarly, fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workers have also chosen the MRR as their temporary residence (Interviewees 17, 21, 41, 43; Kirk, 2020b). This situation puts pressure on the housing market and leads to price speculation (see Brennan, 2014; Godden, 2021). As Interviewee 18, a member of a local community organisation, indicated:

[I] would say accommodation could be a challenge. There seems to be a fair amount of accommodation but a lot of it is private [for example there are] people in Perth who maintain holiday homes down here (...) only they and their friends are having availability in those accommodations (...)

[Interviewee 18, March 2021]

Another driver of this challenge is the change from long-term rental accommodation to short-stay accommodation (for instance, Airbnb, Stayz, Vrbo). According to the interviewees, this is because more residents want to be part of the tourism industry and receive its economic benefits. Interviewee 17, who owned a short-stay accommodation, explained:

[T]he general income in the MRR is not very high, people aren't very rich or not rich, so a lot of people need supplementary income and that is when tourism is great. So, a lot of people are tour guides as part-time or they have an Airbnb or they have a couple of chalets or they drive people around or do hour works on a café, those things are extremely important for the locals (...)

[Interviewee 17, March 2021]

Likewise, a luxury resort manager (Interviewee 44), added that:

[Residents] have been cancelling their long-term rentals and putting them onto Airbnb. So [other] locals can't get rentals anyway, our staff can't get rentals anywhere. So they've got no accommodation down here (...) [but] the locals are getting their own back on the tourism industry, I guess it's fair (...) they're making the most of it (...)

[Interviewee 44, February 2021]

The proliferation of short-stay accommodation has also generated complaints from registered accommodation providers, such as hotels and resorts, as several short-stay accommodation providers are unregistered, a scenario that the former consider unfair (ABC Premium News, 2017a; Acott, 2018; Morris and Neuweiler, 2019). These complaints received more attention since a report by Curtin University in 2017 indicated a significant increase of Airbnb accommodation without monitoring from local or state authorities (ABC Premium News, 2017a; Pforr et al., 2017). Such a pattern has continued and could remain as this type of accommodation is very profitable (Figure 53) (Pforr et al., 2021).

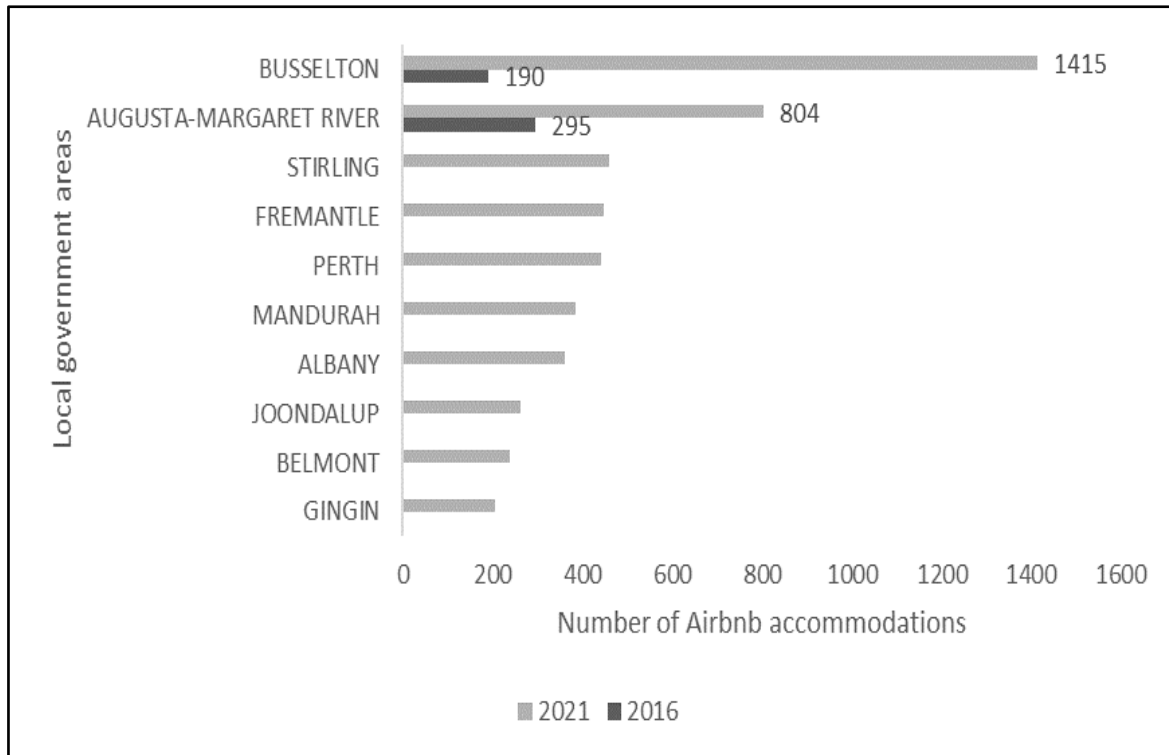


Figure 53: Number of Airbnb establishments in the MRR in 2016 and 2021\*, based on data retrieved from Inside Airbnb (2021) and Pforr et al. (2017)

\*The information is based on registered Airbnb accommodation facilities. 2016 data was only available for the MRR.

The impact of housing on the availability of workers for the hospitality and wine industries apparently started in the last decade (see Brennan, 2014; Macri, 2008b; Sprague, 2007a) and since then it has been “growing in the background” as indicated by Interviewee 43. Godden (2021) reports that the housing crisis in the AMR could result in migration of tourism and agriculture workers towards other regions with better housing supply (see also McGlone, 2021). The shortage of staff is a barrier for many tourism firms as some of them have to shorten opening hours (Figure 54) or change their expansion plans as described by Interviewee 43, a chalet owner:

[I] think that [shortage of staff] is probably one of the things that limits us growing (...) the difficulty in getting staff. So, when we think about expanding (...) we've got to think about staff, and we know you can't get staff (...) How are you going to run a business if you can't get good quality staff - that would be an issue.

[Interviewee 43, May 2021]





Figure 54: Restaurant in Busselton closing due to shortage of staff, Loney and Pancia (2022, online)

Not least important are the environmental and social impacts of this challenge. For instance, Interviewee 1 reported that the unavailability of housing for workers promotes illegal camping in bushland and forests as these areas have become temporary housing options for transient workers. Likewise, the increasing number of holiday homes and short-stay accommodation is transforming the region into a place that some residents cannot tolerate. As Interviewee 15, a local pioneer surfer and long-time resident, reported:

[I] am talking now as a resident, Airbnb has taken over down here (...) that's causing chaos for people like myself. [There is an] Airbnb next door down [and] tourists coming here for a weekend (...) they make the most of it yelling and shouting, causing problems for me. [Airbnb] has killed the long-term rental market here in Dunsborough (...) and in Margaret River too (...)

[Interviewee 15, March 2021]

In effect, the shortage of staff has a direct impact on the economic sustainability of the region's tourism industry as well as on the relationship between the industry and the residents (social impact) and on the environment. This challenge also highlights the dependency of the MRR as a tourist destination on transient workforce which is a common feature of regional Australian destinations according to Interviewees 9 and 31.



#### 7.2.4. Climate change and water supply

Climate change has detrimental effects worldwide. In the case of Australia, Garnaut (2008) reports some historical trends such as moderate increases in annual precipitation in the northwest and substantial declines in rainfall in south Australia since the 1950s. Considering those trends, it is possible to forecast the potential effects of climate change in Australia. For instance, average temperatures are expected to rise especially in coastal areas, changes in rainfall patterns related to draughts, increase in the frequency of hot days and warm nights, and increased intensity of bushfires (Garnaut, 2008; Lucas, 2007). While those projections are from the previous decade, they do indicate that the impact of climate change on Australia is directly related to increasing global average temperatures. Considering the recent IPCC (Lawrence et al., 2022) report for Australasia, the scenarios have not changed. The report shows that Southern Australia (including the MRR) is projected to experience reductions in mean rainfall, increased aridity, and more intense droughts. As such, climate change has direct implications for tourism in Australia.

As discussed in section 3.4, climate change represents a challenge for tourism including the area of study. For instance, Ecker et al. (2010) indicate that climate change represents a contextual barrier for the development of agritourism and food tourism – which are some of the key types of tourism in the MRR – in Australia. The authors explain that increasing temperatures can result in crops losses which would demand higher investments from the farmers. Jones et al. (2010) report that climate change could affect its attractiveness which would require further investment to mitigate or adapt the tourism sector to upcoming climatic scenarios. For instance, they indicate that the sea level rise could result in loss of biodiversity and habitats as well as in coastal erosion and changes in wave and surf conditions. In that sense, it is promising that WA and the local governments are demonstrating higher engagement with initiatives towards achieving net zero scenarios. For instance, between 2019 and 2021 the share of renewables in the South West area has increased from 68% to 79% (Energy Policy WA, 2021). Likewise, AMR Council has organised a Climate Action Summit to reduced emissions and promote conservation (Green Destinations, 2021). However, given that climate change does not respond

solely to local actions, but it is instead a global phenomenon, local and state actions can result insufficient.

This scenario is highly concerning for the area of study as it is located in one of the 25 global hotspots for wildlife and plants (Bradshaw and Lambers, 2016, see also section 5.7). Myers et al. (2000) explain that conservation hotspots are areas with high concentrations of endemic species and, at the same time, exceptional loss of habitat. While Southwestern Australia – the hotspot where the MRR is inside – harbours 7,239 vascular plant out of which 80% are endemic, it is also vulnerable to the impact to *inter alia* climate change as it is strongly linked to intense bushfires (Bradshaw and Lambers, 2016). In the last decade, the most destructive bushfires in the MRR took place in 2011, 2016 and 2020. Given that tourism in the MRR relies on the natural capital of the region, it is understandable that climate change is considered a challenge. According to the interview analysis, this challenge has direct implications in the frequency and intensity of bushfires, the wine tourism industry, and water supply.

The tourism industry suffers the impact of bushfires according to local news as the number of visitors tend to drop (Birmingham, 2020; Busselton - Dunsborough Mail, 2020; Elborough, 2012a, 2012b; Ingram, 2016; Loney, 2012). Ecker et al. (2010) also indicate that bushfires are a hurdle for agritourism businesses as it poses a risk to, for example, vineyards. While the intensity and frequency of bushfires is related to climate change, interviewees point out that tourism has a role to play. For instance, Interviewees 17 and 42 suggest that visitors must be made aware of the risks associated with open fires in the bushland. In turn, Interviewee 22 points out that land clearing for tourism infrastructure increases the risk of bushfires. All in all, it is evident that tourism in the MRR is vulnerable to bushfires and focusing on climate change mitigation plans are pivotal in order to reduce the frequency of situations such as the one in Figure 55 and therefore careful planning and novel bushfire mitigation techniques should be considered (see Galbreath, 2014; Jones et al., 2010). For instance, Interviewee 50, an accommodation provider is working with Aboriginal people to carry out traditional burning fire workshops in the region. However, the documentary analysis indicates that government actions tend to put more emphasis on recovery measures. For instance, after the massive bushfires in

2012 and 2016, WA state helped the MRR by funding marketing campaigns (Elborough, 2012a; Ingram, 2016). Furthermore, despite the damaging effect of bushfires in the region, it appears surprising that for some interviewees, including residents and authorities, bushfires are becoming normal. For instance, Interviewee 5 argued that:

[I]f you are going to the (...) MRR where you actually have very high flame zone risk, bushfires are something that is normalised in Australia (...) we have levels of governance for mitigation of bushfires, especially in the MRR [so] I don't think people are nervous of that (...)

[Interviewee 5, February 2021]



Figure 55: Bushfire nearby an important winery in 2011, Augusta-Margaret River Mail (2020, online)

Climate change has also a direct impact on wine and tourism industries – key sectors in the MRR. Interviewees expressed that climate change could have an impact on wine production due to changes in the rainfall in the Southwest region (see, for instance, Jones et al., 2010). As a result, the wine region could lose competitiveness against other wine regions. For instance, Thompson (2015) identifies climate change as a development barrier for the Margaret River wine region while not for the Barossa Valley. As a result, it is understandable that wine producers in the region are investing in mitigation and adaptation measures (Galbreath, 2012).

For instance, Galbreath (2012) identifies actions towards reducing greenhouse gases emissions including decreasing the use of agrichemicals and considering change to renewable energy sources. All in all, given that the wine-tourism is an important destination pull-factor, negative effects on it could have an impact on the tourism industry. For instance, Interviewee 2 indicated that:

[C]limate change is the big deal for Margaret River (...) particularly warming and drying [climate patterns] in the southwest is a seriously big deal (...) since 1970 (...)

[Interviewee 2, March 2021]

Closely related to the climate change challenge is the insufficient support for green energy development. As such, while tourism accommodation providers might be interested in installing solar panels, they argue that it is expensive and might not necessarily foster economic benefits (see also Kirk, 2019a). However, a number of interviewees have reported investment in solar energy mainly motivated by future benefits.

In addition to the impact on the wine industry, climate change could also impact on the conditions of the caves which are still an iconic pull-factor in the region. That is because water levels in the caves have been decreasing which according to some interviewees is in part due to the impact of climate change. Thompson (2015) report similar opinions from participants in the MRR as well as Jones et al. (2010).

Nonetheless, interviewees also indicate that while underground water is vulnerable to climate change there are other actions that could worsen this issue. For instance, Interviewee 2 that drawing water from underground aquifers, such as the Yarragadee aquifer, and the construction of dams, such as Ten Mile Brook, could influence the underground water system. As a result, manmade activities together with climate change could endanger endemic wildlife and the streams flowing under the caves affecting the natural component of the destination.

Nonetheless, a number of interviewees, while acknowledging that climate change is a challenge, argued that the MRR will not be as impacted as other wine regions. Most importantly, a representative of Tourism WA (Interviewee 31) mentioned that even if climate change drastically affects the wine industry, the tourism industry would be able to continue as it has a broad base of tourism drivers. Similar opinions

were reported by some vigneron interviewed by Jones et al. (2010) and Galbreath (2012). Still, stronger political action is needed to mitigate and adapt the tourism sector in the MRR to the impact of climate change.

#### 7.2.5. Visitors' behaviour

The environmental and sociocultural impact of tourism growth in the region have been aggravated by the behaviour and practices of some visitors. Indeed, according to 20.4 % of interviewees, the low awareness of some visitors about their impact on the environment or on the residents is another challenge to the tourism industry in the MRR. For instance, according to the interviewees, actions such as littering (Interviewees 15, 16 and 17); destruction of bushland by illegal camping (Figure 56) and off-road driving (Interviewees 17 and 37); damaging old Jarrah trees (Interviewees 6 and 37); risk exposure for a *selfie* (Interviewee 30); overflowing of public bins during peak seasons (Interviewee 48); and disturbance of residents often linked to alcohol consumption (Interviewee 15) are some of the examples of visitors' negative behaviour.

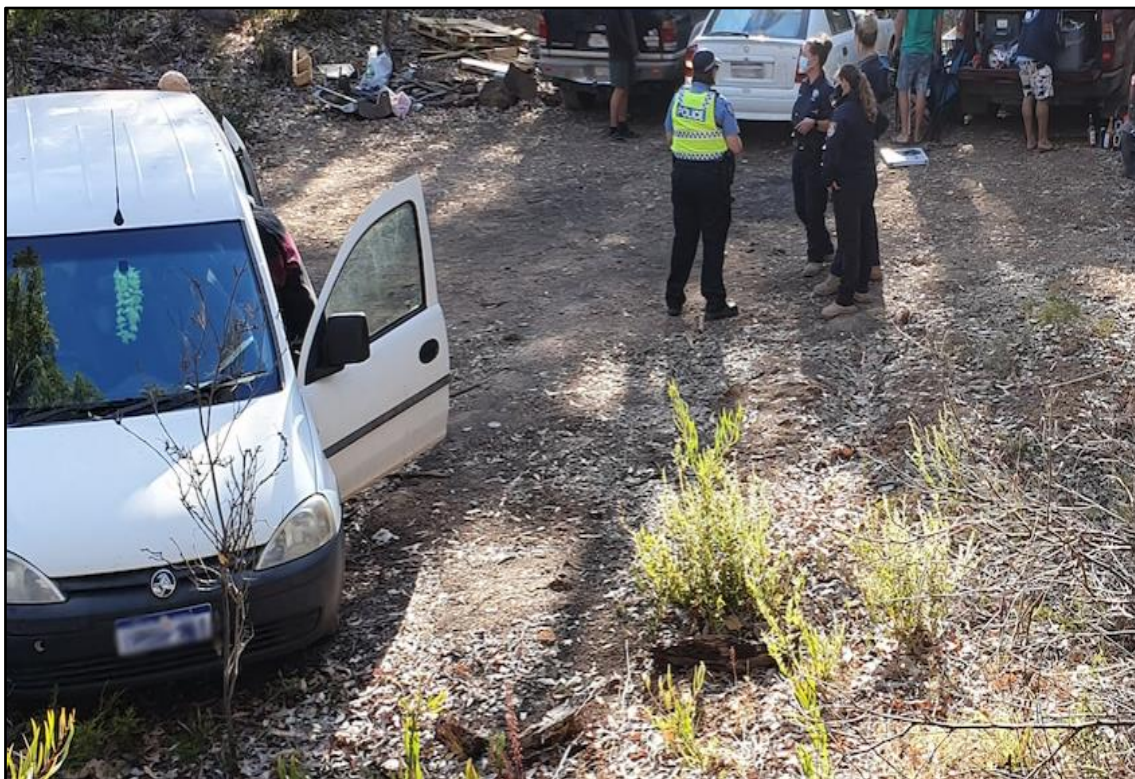


Figure 56: Police fining illegal campers in AMR, Pancia (2022, online)



Clearly, this challenge exacerbates the negative perception that some residents have about the growth of the tourism industry. In turn, this unacceptable behaviour could have repercussions on the natural capital of the region such as native forests and bushland. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that more visitors coming to the region demonstrate higher awareness about their impact on the environment and the residents (Interviewees 12, 13, 17, and 44).

#### 7.2.6. Low participation of Aboriginal people in tourism

Although a number of interviewees acknowledged the importance of the Wardandi Noongar culture and people, they only reported one successful Aboriginal-owned tourism operator (see Wilson-Clark, 2003). As Interviewee 11, a member of UNWTO regional tourism observatory, indicated:

[I]n the tourism offering today [in the MRR], [Aboriginal culture] plays a minor role because there are not many Aboriginal or Indigenous tourism operators in the region. There is one which is a high-quality operator, but in general, it plays a minor role (...)

[Interviewee 11, February 2021]

It is possible to infer from the interviews that while the tourism industry benefits from the Aboriginal culture, there are few opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in the industry. In a similar vein, Interviewee 31, a representative of TWA, observed that while the participation of Aboriginal people in tourism is an important component of sustainable tourism in the MRR, their participation is limited due to a large history of dispossession and displacement. Nevertheless, it is important to remark the efforts of MRBTA to incorporate Aboriginal people as one of the main components of the destination image (Block, 2015; MRBTA, 2017). As such, Aboriginal people-led organisations are included in decision-making processes regarding tourism such as South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council (MRBTA, 2017). The participation of this organisation could contribute to the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge (see subsection 2.2.3) to the tourism policymaking and decision-making processes in the MRR.

### 7.2.7. Inherent features of the destination

The MRR as a tourist destination has a number of characteristics that are understood as challenges to the tourism industry. As such, the interviewees acknowledged that the industry must learn to cope with them or mitigate their impact. Those features include seasonality, accessibility, population growth, and aforementioned shark attacks.

Seasonality directly affects the economic performance of the tourism industry. For instance, seasonality deters accommodation providers from expanding their infrastructure to cater for more visitors in the summer as they would have underoccupied premises during the winter (Interviewee 25). Similarly, seasonality pushes tour operators to receive as many clients as possible during peak seasons to counterbalance the low demand during the winter (Interviewee 45), although this could affect the quality of experience for the visitors in peak seasons. Likewise, seasonality constrains tourism businesses and makes them dependent on transient workers as their demand for labour is not the same over the entire year. However, this involves training workers every year and a struggle to secure staff for the peak seasons (Interviewees 5, 31, 37, 51). Interviewee 45, an owner of a tour operator company in the region, commented about this challenge:

[The challenge] is around seasonality, is a huge thing (...) In [peak] season we are frenetically busy booked out, crazy busy, and then offseason we are completely dead. Like many tourism places (...) So, attracting and maintaining staffing levels in their environment is very challenging. I think that seasonality probably brings the biggest challenges (...)

[Interviewee 45, April 2021]

The interviewees indicated that during the winter (June to August) the number of visitors diminishes drastically compared to the summer (December to February). As such, tourism authorities, DMOs, and tourism service providers have carried out several attempts to reduce the seasonality of the region by promoting winter events such as art related festivals and even, once, an ice-skating ring which triggered debates about the destination image (Jerrard, 2008; Macri, 2008c; The West Australian, 2008). However, Interviewee 38 argued that seasonality in the MRR is not as pronounced as in other destinations in WA such as Broome. Yet, he accepts that seasonality represents an important economic challenge.

The fact that Perth – an obligatory stop for interstate and international visitors coming to the MRR – is one of the most spatially isolated cities in the world could also be a deterrent for visitors as it entails extra costs and time. As Interviewee 51 explained:

[W]e are two and a half hours south of Perth and obviously Perth is the most isolated city in the world (...) So, to try to get international tourists to fly long haul from the UK or the US or [from] anywhere to Perth is a big thing to ask. Then to jump in a car or a bus for two and a half hours is a pretty big thing to ask after an 18 to 20 hour-flight. So, I think they [isolation and accessibility] are probably the main issues, the actual logistics of getting here (...)

[Interviewee 51, March 2021]

As such, the destination location also represents a challenge for marketing campaigns as they must convince potential visitors to prioritise the destination image over the transport logistics and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. For instance, Interviewee 9, a former member of the local tourism body, indicated that:

[T]he challenge is its [the region's] isolation, its location. It is in the end of Australia, long way from global markets. So it is not an easy destination to get to. So that is its greatest challenge in [terms of] marketing the region, I would say, is its accessibility (...)

[Interviewee 9, February 2021]

In an attempt to overcome this challenge, interviewees highlighted the impact of interstate flights from Melbourne as a result of the rebranded Busselton Margaret River regional airport. However, investment in accessibility and reducing the region's isolation must be accompanied by investments in the region's infrastructure. All in all, this challenge is clearly a complex one as overcoming it would have a drastic impact on the sense of place of the destination – especially considering that for many residents it is the region's isolation and rural feeling that motivated them to move to the region (Interviewees 3, 10, 11, 17, 46).

Population growth is also considered as a challenge to the tourism industry as it could damage the region's rural feeling. This challenge is a concern as residents consider that the region is not ready for the projected population growth. For instance, Busselton expects to maintain a 4 % population growth reaching 50,000 people by 2026; while AMR exhibits a 3 % growth rate and expects to have 11,000



people by 2031 (AMR Council, 2017; City of Busselton council, 2016). As such, according to Interviewees 16, 20, 22, 37, and 46, this challenge will lead to overdevelopment and exacerbate the pressure on the region's natural capital if not managed carefully.

In a different context, although not mentioned by the interviewees as a challenge, a number of newspaper articles reported that shark attacks could deter visitors from visiting the region (Barrass, 2012; Loney, 2012). According to local surfers, shark sightings have increased in the last decade and could potentially represent a risk for surfers who could opt for other beach destinations. For instance, in 2018, the Margaret River Pro Surfing event (MR Pro) was cancelled under the fear of sharks in the beaches (see Figure 57) (ABC Premium News, 2018a, 2018b; Burrell, 2018). As such, there has been a persisting debate about sharks' conservation and management (AAP General News Wire, 2018; Dow Jones Institutional News, 2014; Mitchell and Mercer, 2018; Pownall and Barone, 2013).



Figure 557: Professional surfer's (Gabriel Medina) Instagram post, Charlotte Hamlyn [@charlottehamlyn] (2018)

Finally, a common complaint by interviewed residents is related to the insufficient amount of car parking space (Hately, 2022; Keenan, 2021). However, as Interviewees 49, 51, and 53 discussed, the problem lies in the insufficient public transportation in the region and the few attempts to promote active forms of transport such as walking and cycling (see also Melville, 2022). As a result, most of tourists tend to use cars to access every tourist attraction and the towns all have overflowing car parks in peak season. car dependency affects the relationship between residents and the tourism industry as well as contributes to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In summary, this section reveals that the continuity of the tourism industry in the MRR and the maintenance of its attractive image is facing several challenges that are complex, interlinked, and embedded in the destination. Likewise, it is important to highlight that most of these challenges are directly linked to the tourism activity itself. As Interviewee 31 mentioned about the MRR as a tourist destination “what makes it [the destination] very attractive, also makes it [the destination] vulnerable”. Hence, addressing these challenges by means of mitigating their impacts is pivotal for the destination and its tourism industry. The next section identifies main actions and measures identified at the destination that aim to address these challenges by means of promoting sustainable tourism and other sustainability-related measures.

### **7.3. Sustainability initiatives**

Given the complex challenges and their impacts presented in the previous section, it is clear that the tourism industry in the MRR needs to find a balance between growing as an industry and reducing its environmental and sociocultural impact. As Interviewee 11, a tourism academic based in Perth (WA), stated:

[T]he sensitive balance [of the destination] needs to be kept because otherwise the region will not be interesting as a place to live (...) we [also] need it [the MRR] to be interesting as a tourism destination because tourists come there for the environment (...) So it's not necessarily manmade attractions that make a difference there (...) it is really the beautiful nature. That is crucial. And if this [the balance] is not maintained, then the tourism destination itself will lose its attractiveness (...) that's the key thing.

[Interviewee 11, February 2021]

Similarly, Interviewee 16, a member of a resident's association, indicated:

[W]e are having a lot of climate pressure and, on top of that, the rest of WA is getting very dry, so a lot of species move to the southwest corner because the environment is suitable for them (...) so there is all this balance trying to maintain the biodiversity, maintain the environment, yet cater of more tourism, it is not easy (...)

[Interviewee 16, March 2021]

In order to achieve such a balance, the tourism industry in the MRR could benefit from incorporating sustainability into its activities as it could reduce trade-offs between its economic, environmental, and sociocultural impact leading to sustainable tourism, as argued by Mihalic's (2016) and Prosser's (1994) in Chapter 3. Certainly, progress in line with sustainable tourism has been made as described by several interviewees (81.5 % of the interviewees reported at least one initiative related to sustainability in the tourism industry). Hence, based on the UNEP and UNWTO's (2005) definition of sustainable tourism, the interview analysis identified those initiatives that could contribute to the following:

- Make an optimal use of the environmental resources that are basic for the local tourism industry (caves, forest, coastline, and biodiversity),
- Promote a better rapport between the development of the local tourism industry and the host community (residents and Aboriginal people) without disturbing the existing social fabric and lifestyle,
- Engage Wardandi Noongar people into the tourism industry while at the same time conserving their built and living cultural heritage (Boodja or Country),
- Secure the operations of the tourism industry in the long-term providing socio-economic benefits fairly distributed to the tourism stakeholders including the labour force, such as backpackers, and residents.

Considering these features, it was possible to identify initiatives in the tourism industry in the MRR in relation to the three dimensions of sustainability. The identified initiatives focus not only on the environmental and sociocultural dimensions but also on promoting the continuous operation of the tourism industry. As a result, Table 19 presents a compilation of all the identified initiatives, including the actors involved in their design and implementation. Interview and documentary analysis were used for this compilation.

Table 19: Sustainability initiatives in the Margaret River region from interview analysis and review of literature review about the MRR

Type of initiative	Identified initiatives	Actors involved
Addressing housing crisis	Advocating for regulations on short-stay accommodations	Tourism-related businesses RAPMRR (Registered accommodation providers in the MRR)
	Exchanging accommodation for work on farming	Tourism-related businesses
	Using accommodation facilities to host homeless people (pilot project)	Tourism-related businesses Just Home MR
Conserving natural capital	Advocating and raising awareness about the importance of native forests	Grannies for trees Save Mowen Forest WA Forest Alliance AMR council WA state government
	Developing projects to protect and enhance native forest (for instance, Karri Bowl project in Caves Road)	AMR council Undalup association WA state government DBCA
	Organising activities to remove invasive species (for instance, Arum Lilly blitz programme)	Nature conservation MR
	Protecting sensitive coastal areas (for instance, dunes, creeks) from visitors	Residents' associations AMR council Busselton council Nature conservation MR
	Organising among residents to advocate, protest, and raise awareness in the local community about specific tourism development projects in coastal environments (for instance, Save Smith's Beach Again, Preserve Gnarabup)	Residents Surfrider Foundation (only with Preserve Gnarabup) Nature conservation MR (providing information)
	Engaging Aboriginal people with the tourism industry	Engaging Aboriginal people in workshops at accommodations (for instance, traditional fire burning workshops)
Including Aboriginal people in the design of a coastal pledge for visitors		MR Climate Action group Nature Conservation MR
Including Aboriginal people in local fire recovery strategies		AMR council Undalup association MRBTA Nature conservation MR
Organising educational events about Aboriginal culture by Aboriginal people open for residents and tourists		Transition Town MR Undalup Association

Type of initiative	Identified initiatives	Actors involved
	Promoting Indigenous tourism in national parks	DBCA
	Promoting Aboriginal tours and experiences (for instance, Koomal dreaming, Cape cultural tours, Djiljit coastal fishing experience)	MRBTA Aboriginal-owned tours
Increasing staff availability	Creating attractive conditions for local staff	Tourism-related businesses
	Incentivising local people to work in regional areas (for instance, Work and Wander out Yonder programme)	WA state government
	Relocating seasonal staff within branches of the same firm	Tourism-related businesses
	Strengthening relations with seasonal staff by finding placements for them in other destinations during low seasons (in process)	Tourism-related businesses
Improving accessibility	Opening direct flights between Melbourne and MRR	Qantas MRBTA AMR council Busselton council Tourism WA
	Providing free transport for visitors from the BMR regional airport and Busselton	Busselton council
Improving visitor's experience	Developing sustainable facilities in national parks	DBCA
	Training wine firms in hospitality and tourism service	Tourism WA Tourism-related businesses
	Tailoring wine-tourism experiences for visitors (for instance, Ultimate Wine Experience)	Tourism WA Tourism-related businesses
	Improving access for people with disabilities in the national parks	DBCA
Improving waste management	Banning single-use plastics	WA state government
	Implementing a three-bin system	AMR council
	Implementing waste-free tours	Tourism-related businesses
	Organising beach cleaning	Residents' associations
	Promoting plastic-free events	Tourism-related businesses
	Reducing use of plastics	Tourism-related businesses
	Using organic waste for compost production	AMR council
Promoting and using green energy sources	Encouraging tourism-related businesses to opt for green energy options	AMR Clean Community Energy
	Establishing wind and solar farms (project in stand-by)	AMR Clean Community Energy
	Installing solar panels and solar water heating systems in accommodations and wineries	Tourism-related businesses AMR Clean Community Energy

Type of initiative	Identified initiatives	Actors involved
Promoting sustainable businesses	Adopting sustainability measures (for instance, solar energy, organic wine production, environmental strategies, waste and single-use plastic reduction, recycling, composting, heritage protection, active travel, energy and water efficiency, sustainability-related workshops and events, permaculture practices)	Tourism-related businesses
	Following an eco-accreditation programme (for instance, eco-certification, wine growing Australia)	Tourism-related businesses MRBTA AMR council Ecotourism Australia
	Marketing sustainability measures	MRBTA Australia's Southwest Tourism WA Tourism Australia Tourism-related businesses
	Promoting environmental stewardship (for instance, Giant light steps)	Nature Conservation MR AMR council MRBTA MR Chamber of commerce Transition town MR Southwest Catchments Council
Promoting a sustainable destination	Applying and undergoing an eco-destination certification process	Ecotourism Australia AMR council MRBTA
	Applying to become a Geopark (in process)	MRBTA UNESCO
	Focusing on high-value visitors rather than on mass tourism	MRBTA Tourism-related businesses
	Choosing local suppliers	Tourism-related businesses
	Promoting tourist consumption of local produce and products	Tourism-related businesses MR Farmers market AMR council
Promoting sustainable transport	Developing plans to upgrade and connect walking trails within the region (for instance, Our Unbeaten Tracks)	MRBTA Australia's Southwest AMR council Busselton council Southwest Development Commission Friends of the Cape-to-Cape track DBCA

Type of initiative	Identified initiatives	Actors involved
	Encouraging local walking tours	Tourism-related businesses MRBTA
	Exploring options for electric car charging stations (in process)	Tourism-related businesses Royal Automobile Club
	Investing on cycling infrastructure	WA state government AMR council Busselton council
	Promoting cycling tourism and cycling events	WA state government AMR council Busselton council
	Promoting beach access for cyclist	Residents' associations AMR council Busselton council
Promoting efficient water use and disposal	Adopting measures for efficient water usage and water disposal (for instance, accommodation providers with wastewater treatment plants, rainwater collectors, new bathroom equipment)	Water corporation Tourism-related businesses
	Developing programmes to raise awareness about water usage among guests at accommodation providers	Water corporation Tourism-related businesses
	Reusing treated wastewater for green spaces including golf courts	Water corporation
Raising visitor's awareness	Developing a coastal pledge for visitors (in process)	MR Climate Action group Nature Conservation MR Residents' associations
	Developing apps to inform surfers about shark presence in beaches	WA state government
	Events and workshops for visitors about the region's nature and culture	Tourism-related businesses Transition Town MR Undalup Association Water corporation AMR council

Based on Table 19, Figure 58 presents the actors that are most involved in the sustainability initiatives. It is possible to notice that tourism-related lead the way. This agrees with the interviewees operating in tourism firms who called for a stronger leadership towards sustainability from the government authorities. Nonetheless, it is also possible to notice that the local councils and the WA state government have contributed to some of the initiatives. Regarding the tourism bodies, MRBTA plays a major role compared with Tourism WA and Australia’s Southwest. This could be due to the local scope of the MRBTA and its continuous efforts to maintain an adequate destination image. Indeed, MRBTA is involved in the most ambitious initiatives (Eco-destination and Geopark). It is also important to remark the role of not-for-profit organisations. Most of these organisations act as brokers between the government and residents including Aboriginal people. Precisely, Undalup Association is playing an important role in the engagement of Aboriginal people in the tourism industry. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the efforts to transform the current tourism industry in the MRR are top-down as well as bottom-up.

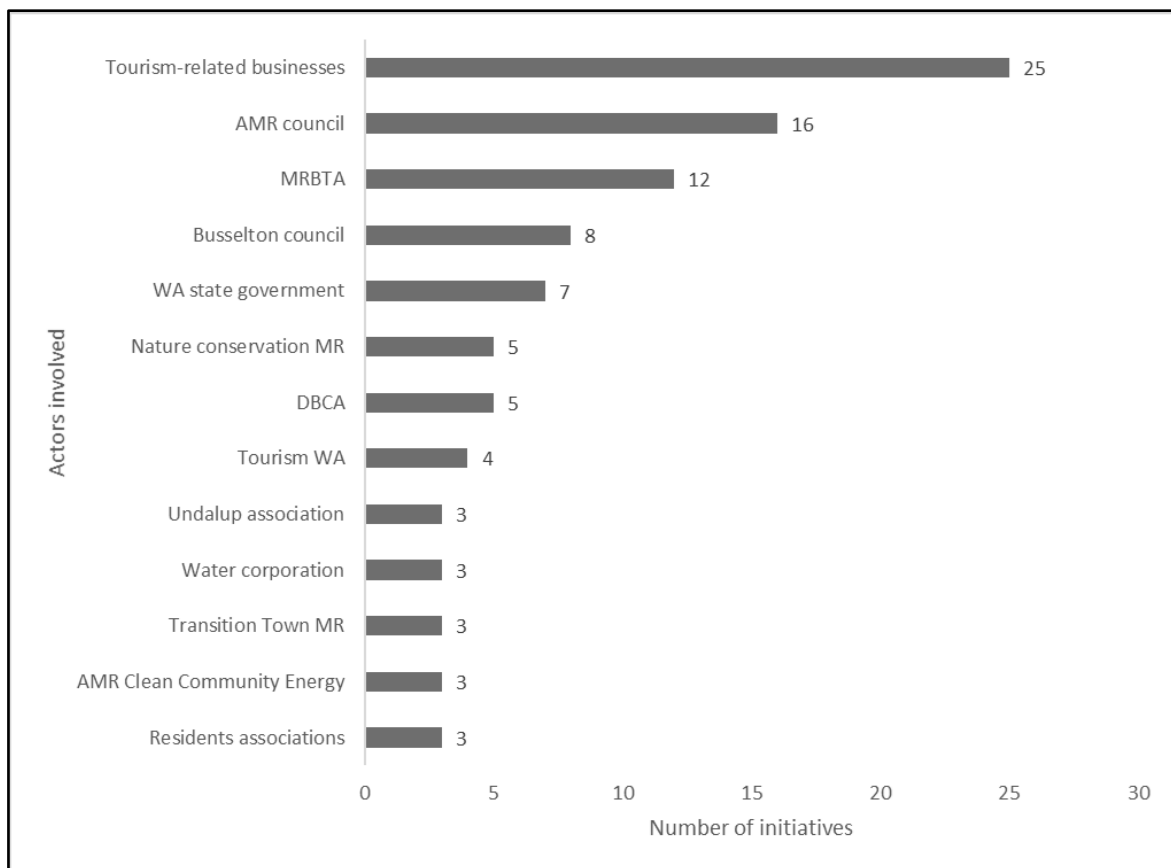


Figure 568: Top ten most involved actors in sustainability initiatives



The sustainability initiatives represent a clear decision from tourism stakeholders to reduce the negative impact of tourism on the destination. Many of the initiatives follow the principles of sustainability in tourism indicated by Mowforth and Munt (2015). According to them, a sustainable destination should incorporate initiatives that promote ecological, social, cultural, and economic sustainability, local participation, educational processes, and biodiversity and cultural conservation. While all the initiatives listed above are related to at least one of the principles indicated by (Mowforth and Munt, 2015), some initiatives stand out. For instance, initiatives in the category of conservation of natural capital, promotion of sustainable businesses, and sustainable destination are able to comply with most of the principles. It is important to remark the scale of the eco-destination certification initiative as it aims to incorporate sustainable principles into the tourism industry at the destination level. Mowforth and Munt (2015) indicates that these principles are only prescriptive and might not be completely present in a destination. Although, to find initiatives able to promote most of these principles are a positive sign that a destination is aware of the necessity to transition towards more sustainable practices. In that sense, a destination such as the MRR with 56 identified initiatives is clearly aware of its necessity to transition to a more sustainable scenario.

In summary, these initiatives represent a stance of all tourism stakeholders to improve the current industry by means of incorporating sustainability principles. While motivations could be driven by economic or pure sustainability interests, these initiatives share the common objective of mitigating the impacts of the tourism industry and conserving an attractive destination image. As Interviewee 3 mentioned:

[The region's] tourism reputation is built on the idea of it being a pristine region (that is) clean, green, and safe. But it's important that that reputation to be substantiated with actual (...) sustainability credentials. So, I think that probably the single most important thing for tourism is to make sure that the sustainability, the clean, the green, and the cultural, including Indigenous cultural claims, can be substantiated (...)

[Interviewee 3, February 2021]

However, as noted in Figure 59, the initiatives do not address all the challenges, in particular population growth. This challenge would require a more direct approach and a stronger political will from authorities beyond tourism considering that bottom-up initiatives lack the capacity to make changes at that scale. In the same vein, it can

be noted in Figure 59 that initiatives such as conserving natural capital, promoting a sustainable destination, promoting sustainable businesses, and raising visitors' awareness focused on several challenges. As such, these initiatives could shape a more sustainable destination. However, as long as the challenges are not addressed in a systematic manner, deep transformations of the tourism industry are far from being achieved. Yet, it is possible to notice an increasing awareness of the impacts of tourism in the destination and increasing efforts to steer the current tourism industry to a more sustainable trajectory. As a result, it can be argued that these initiatives have the potential to promote a sustainable transition in tourism in the Margaret River region but would require a more systematic and coordinated approach.

Sustainability initiatives	Sustainability challenges											
	Pressures on sensible coastal areas	Disruption of local social fabric	Scarce housing and shortage of staff	Climate change and water supply	Visitor's behaviour	Low participation of Aboriginal people	Seasonality	Isolation and accessibility	Population growth	Bushfires	Shark attacks	Car dependence
Addressing housing crisis												
Conserving natural capital												
Engaging Aboriginal people with tourism												
Improving staff availability												
Improving accessibility												
Improving visitor's experience												
Improving waste management												
Promoting and using green energy sources												
Promoting sustainable businesses												
Promoting a sustainable destination												
Promoting sustainable transport												
Promoting efficient water use and disposal												
Raising visitor's awareness												

Figure 579: Sustainability initiatives versus challenges

In sum, the MRR as a tourist destination faces several complex and interrelated challenges generated mainly by the economic, environmental, and sociocultural impact of tourism. Yet, it is possible to identify some bottom-up and top-down initiatives to bring solutions to those challenges, some of them with the potential to steer the destination towards more sustainable trajectories. However, in the current situation of the destination radical systematic solutions are still in need of stronger support and further innovations. For instance, the sustainable destination initiative – that is addressed in-detail in the next chapter – despite being recently achieved by AMR, it has not been yet achieved by Busselton; therefore, it is not possible to indicate that the entire MRR is an eco-destination. Scenarios like this one represent a hurdle to sustainable shifts at the destination level. As such, the destination is clearly in the process of a new transition. This time, a sustainability transition. The following section summarises the main findings of this chapter and prepares the ground for Chapter 8.

#### **7.4. Summary and conclusions**

This chapter has explored the current conditions and characteristics of the MRR as a tourist destination that resulted from the transition addressed in Chapter 6. This chapter analysed the destination in detail in order to identify the challenges deriving from the impacts of tourism itself. While the chapter identified several challenges, it also revealed a number of sustainability initiatives taking place at the destination. In fact, this chapter argues that the sustainability initiatives are a response to the challenges at the destination and are driven by two main motivations. On the one hand, some initiatives such as improving waste management or visitors' experience aim to improve the destination conditions to make it more attractive to visitors. This motivation, despite its positive objectives, does not break with the pro-growth trajectory of the destination embedded in the regime rules. On the other hand, initiatives such as promoting a sustainable destination and businesses or conserving natural and cultural capital have a more radical and systematic approach. These initiatives could potentially reorient the destination trajectory towards more sustainable scenarios. Therefore, this chapter meets the first research question as it identifies and analyses the challenges faced by the tourism industry in the MRR and as well as the various sustainability initiatives (some of them with higher potential than others) emerging as a response to those challenges. In that sense, this chapter

argues that the MRR is far from being an unsustainable tourist destination as it is in the process to incorporate sustainability-related principles to its tourism industry. However, that is not a simple task.

Furthermore, this chapter can provide a partial answer to the second research question that can be complemented later by Chapter 8 by means of using the phases of sustainability transitions. In that sense, based on the exploration of the destination's challenges and sustainability initiatives, this chapter argues that while the tourism industry and its stakeholders aim to increase the economic and social benefits from tourism, there are emerging initiatives proposing a more environmentally and culturally aware trajectory for the destination. As such, this chapter has demonstrated that within the destination there is a "dialectic relationship between stability and change" (Köhler et al., 2019, p. 2) which is a feature of every sustainability transition. Another feature identified in this chapter is the normative directionality of a number of sustainability initiatives which is influenced by sustainable development (Chapter 2) and sustainable tourism (Chapter 3). Those initiatives have a clear intention to promote a more environmentally- and socioculturally aware tourism, as opposed to the current tourism industry which denotes a pro-growth trajectory. The latter does not mean that the destination is far away from sustainable tourism, but that the economic aspect is prioritised over environmental and sociocultural aspects.

As a result, this chapter argues that the destination is not fully sustainable and, therefore, it requires a shift towards sustainable tourism. Initial steps are being taken by local authorities and emerging initiatives from residents are becoming stronger, which denotes a clear intention to shift the destination to a new configuration. In other words, there is a sustainability transition in tourism taking place in the MRR. The next chapter will address in-depth such transition.

## **Chapter 8. Sustainability transitions in tourism in the MRR: from tourism boom to the COVID-19 pandemic**

*“I think that tourism will thrive in the Margaret River region because of the type of product that we have.”*

*(Interviewee 49)*

### **8.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter concluded that the MRR as a tourist destination is going through a sustainability transition. Chapter 8 uses the evolutionary economic geography / multi-level perspective (EEG / MLP) framework to analyse that transition in-detail. As such, this chapter continues the analysis of the evolution of the destination presented in Chapter 6. In contrast to the historical transition analysed in Chapter 6, sustainable development and sustainable tourism play a key role in the transition analysed in this chapter. By means of using the EEG / MLP framework this chapter addresses the interactions between the landscape, regime, and niche levels in the pursuit of sustainability transitions in the MRR since the tourism boom (the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) until the end of the research fieldwork in early 2022. To provide a clear analysis of how advanced is the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR, this chapter uses the transition phases (see Geels, 2004) and the typology of sustainability transition (see Geels and Schot, 2007). As such, this chapter complement Chapter's 6 answer to the second research question. Plus, this chapter also addresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sustainability transition of the MRR as a tourist destination. In that sense, this chapter also responds to the fifth research question.

The remainder of this chapter consists of five sections following a similar structure as Chapter 6. Section 8.2 describes the contemporary history of the MRR as a tourist destination which is useful for section 8.3 that conceptualises the current tourism regime. Section 8.4 analyses the ongoing sustainability transition including the impact of the pandemic. The following section (section 8.5) uses the typology of transition pathways to provide an additional analysis of the sustainability transition. Section 8.6 provides summary and conclusions.

## 8.2. Recent history of the destination (2000-2022)

The last two decades of the MRR as a tourist destination are marked by what the media referred to as the *tourism boom*, especially during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Charlick, 2018; Haig, 2009; Rylance, 2000; Sunday Times (Perth), 2005; Zekulich, 2004a). This boom was marked by increasing private investment in luxury accommodations including resorts, spa hotels, retreats, and glamour camping or *glamping* (Carter, 2007; Gregory, 2003; Murray, 2020; Wellington, 2003), surfing-related events and competitions (ABC Premium News, 2017b; Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2018a; Busselton - Dunsborough Mail, 2013; Dortch, 2003; Paddenburg, 2010a, 2011; Trigger, 2013). During this period there was also a clear increase in population and private housing in both LGAs. For instance, between 2001 and 2021 AMR increased its population in 73.9 % and Busselton in 85.9 %. In the same period, the number of private properties (including unoccupied properties) in AMR and Busselton increased in 78.8 % and 94.3 % respectively (ABS, 2021, 2001). This clearly reflects a growing pattern in the region influenced by the tourism boom.

In addition, during this period (2000-2022) public investment focused on international and interstate marketing campaigns and road infrastructure (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2018b; Bailey, 2005; Kelly, 2018; MENA Report, 2019a; Sunday Times (Perth), 2009; Yeap, 2001). The latter responds to the increasing population and number of visitors. In turn, local tourism bodies also contributed to the *tourism boom* by improving booking systems (Scourfield, 2009; The West Australian, 2006) and opening information centres in Perth (Scourfield, 2008; Sunday Times (Perth), 2008). For instance, Interviewee 17 comments on the *tourism boom*:

[The] region has experienced a huge boom in the 2000s and a lot of people from all over the world has come here with all sorts of different interests and agendas and the whole fabric of the population has changed massively, that has only happened because of tourism, not necessarily because of the employment opportunities but because of the reputation (...) all of a sudden MRR was this incredibly desirable place to live (...)

[Interviewee 17, March 2021]

Based on the documentary analysis, the tourism boom in the region and the subsequent development of tourism in the MRR has been mainly underpinned by wine-tourism, beach and surfing tourism, and nature-based tourism and supported by increasing investment in tourism infrastructure. For instance, Interviewee 10, a member of the region's UNWTO tourism observatory, mentioned that:

[W]ine is the big one [tourism driver], [the region is] quite coastal as well so surfing, going to the beach, fishing, diving, and all type of aquatic leisure activities are quite big. Also, there are a lot of national parks [covering] bushlands and some forests; also nature-based tourism is big. [The MRR] is one of those unique places where you go to change lifestyle and you also get a world class wine region. [It] ticks a lot of boxes in tourism appeal: (...) the culinary, wine, ocean, forestry, bushwalks, sporting events, cycling, marathons, triathlons (...) The MRR is a big tourism brand that in the last ten years has solidified.

[Interviewee 10, March 2021]

In the case of wine-tourism, the MRR has received several awards because of its high-quality tourism experiences which have strengthened the region's position as an important regional economic driver and as an international attraction for tourists (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2019b; Pepper, 2007; Powell, 2013; Zekulich, 2004a). An important element in this development was the first international wine-tourism conference that took place in 2000 (Zekulich, 2000). This conference and the subsequent ones showcased the regional high-quality wines and tourism infrastructure to international markets, thus opening the doors for more private investment (Pownall, 2000a; WA Business News, 2004; Zekulich, 2000). Since then, the region has developed a number of luxury accommodation establishments such as lodges and resorts and started a range of art and music events around wine-tourism (Gregory, 2003; Pownall, 2000b; Quinn, 2009a; Rodell, 2019; Zekulich, 2004b, 2004a).

As a result, it is possible to indicate that these decades witnessed the consolidation of wine-tourism as the main tourism component in the region. In fact, besides being a regional economic driver, wine-tourism also contributed to the emergence, and in some cases re-emergence, of complementary industries such as cheese, olive oil, breweries, and chocolate (Busselton - Dunsborough Mail, 2018, 2019a; James, 2000; Kennedy, 2001; Lang, 2001; Lefebvre, 2018; MENA Report, 2018; Rodell, 2019; Rowe, 2009; Sunday Times (Perth), 2001; Taverner, 2018; The West

Australian, 2000; WA Business News, 2003a; Woodburn, 2015). Following the same path as the wine industry in the 1980s, these complementary industries diversified into tourism. For instance, they offer attractive tourist experiences including cheese tasting classes, tours along forests and wineries, gourmet restaurants, wine and beer trails, and local produce tasting (Figure 60). It is possible to notice that in contrast to the cave-focused tourism period, the current tourism industry aims to make visitors take a more active role in the tourism experience. As visitation to the vineyards increased, wineries have had to change some practices to cater for visitors. For instance, a representative of Tourism WA (Interviewee 31) discussed the positive impact of tourism on wineries:

[W]e see glamping and lifestyle, camping, and accommodation amongst the vineyards as potentially, the diversification that would offer huge growth. But the vineyards then have to be very mindful, they cannot use chemicals on their vineyards because you cannot have people staying in wineries where chemicals are being sprayed. So, if you are going to have people living at your winery and experiencing the lifestyle (...) you then generate two crops off the same piece of land (...)

[Interviewee 31, February 2021]



Figure 60: Food and wine experiences in the MRR. Earn your vino (2022 posted on the Facebook page of Walk Talk Taste Margaret River)



In turn, surfing events have become commonplace in the MRR and are an important economic driver due to the international competitions that are often paired with music concerts (ABC Premium News, 2017b; Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2018a; Busselton - Dunsborough Mail, 2013; Dortch, 2003; MENA Report, 2019b; Paddenburg, 2010a, 2011). For instance, surfing competitions in 2017 are reported to have attracted around 6000 visitors and generated \$5.4 million (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2018c). While 6000 visitors might seem like a small number compared to the almost 1.5 million visitors that the MRR received in the period 2016-2017 (Tourism Western Australia, 2022), the relevance of these competitions is in the national and international attention that they bring to the region as a beach destination. This positive attention becomes affected by news related to surfing competitions disrupted by shark attacks (ABC Premium News, 2018b; Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2018c; Mitchell and Mercer, 2018). The popularity the MRR as a beach destination also attracts movie producers who chose the region's beaches for surfing-related films, with *Drift* in 2013 being the most important example (Figure 61) (The West Australian, 2013). As such, surfing also showcases the region's coastline and other natural amenities to international markets.



Figure 61: Behind the scenes of film *Drift* on the coast near Busselton, Gallo and Carrier (2013, online)

Another important development in the last two decades has been nature-based tourism. Despite initially not being considered as important as wine-tourism (Ozich, 1998), growing global and local concerns about the environment and the related interest in eco-tourism have placed nature-based tourism as another crucial element in the MRR (Adelaide Advertiser, 2001; Malpeli, 1999; Sunday Times (Perth), 2014; The West Australian, 2010a). Nature-based tourism, as defined in Chapter 3, has been present in the MRR since the emergence of tourism mainly based on caves and to a lesser degree on the coastline and native forests. Those natural elements are still relevant for tourism in the region; nonetheless, there is a more integral approach towards them which also includes the role of Aboriginal people, educational campaigns, and green infrastructure projects (Ecotourism Australia, 2016; MRBTA, 2017).

In the last decade important steps towards a renewed and more integral focus on nature-based tourism have been MRBTA's 2015 Your Margaret River Region campaign, MRBTA's 2017 strategy (MRBTA, 2017), and, to a lesser degree, DBCA's 2019-2020 action plan for nature-based tourism (DBCA, 2018). For instance, MRBTA aims to place the MRR as a competitive nature-based tourism destination by means of creating engaging nature-based tourism experiences. In turn, DBCA commits investment to hiking trails and mountain bike tracks in national parks such as Wooditjup and Leeuwin-Naturaliste. All in all, the natural capital of the region continues to play an important role in the destination, as Interview 11, an academic researcher in the region, indicated:

[I]n terms of key products of the region, it's definitely nature-driven. So nature plays an important role. It is one of (...) 25 Global biodiversity hotspots so it is quite unique in fauna and flora, it has thousands of endemic species (...) it is very unique from a nature point of view. So, nature plays an important role that translates into old growth forest in the inland (...), beautiful coastline (...), the marine park and the ocean, the sea in itself, which offers a lot of tourism potential. So, [tourism] is built around nature (...)

[Interviewee 11, February 2021]

In the same vein, eco-businesses such as eco-accommodation and nature-based tours have emerged in the region especially from the beginning of the new century. The emergence of these businesses is underpinned by an increasing global

awareness of climate change and environmental-impact-informed visitors. For instance, Interviewee 41, a booking service provider, mentioned:

[T]here are some properties who were definitely promoting themselves in that way [as eco-accommodation] (...) I can think of the top of my head of four or five of our clients who kind of promote that aspect of being environmentally friendly, and trying to do the right thing across different aspects of their business (...)

[Interviewee 41, May 2021]

Building on the destination's recent history and interview analysis, it is possible to identify the main pull factors of the region. Table 20 presents the main pull factors of the region which directly contribute to shaping the destination's image. The relation between pull factors and destination image and branding was explained in Chapter 3. As the rich combination of pull factors is relevant and useful for marketing strategies (see Blain et al., 2005; Tasci and Kozak, 2006), the MRBTA has focused on creating a recognisable brand that shows the MRR as a unique tourist destination with a large variety of experiences and services for visitors or pull factors (see Moore, 2018; Ruston, 2018; The Daily Telegraph, 2020). In 2015, following the merger of AMRTA and GBTA (see Bickerton, 2014; Busselton-Dunsborough Mail, 2014), the MRBTA launched the brand Your Margaret River Region for the region (Figure 62 and 63) (MRBTA, 2015). Interviewee 39, a booking service provider for several small accommodation establishments in the MRR, commented on the high variety of pull factors that the MRR as a tourist destination has:

[Y]ou have got a variety of offerings down there [at the MRR]. So you have got some towns that can cater for, I guess, different types of people. [For instance,] Busselton, Yallingup, Dunsborough, Margaret River, and Augusta, they all kind of offer something slightly different. So, I think that it is a good thing to be able to have that diversity within a small location [and that] people (visitors) can kind of do different things on different days. [For instance,] you have got the forest, the ocean, the wineries, some of the best restaurants in Western Australia, space [for recreational purposes], tours and experiences that you cannot do elsewhere. So like it is really a fantastic offering for a destination (...)

[Interviewee 39, June 2021]

Table 20: Pull factors of the MRR as a tourist destination

Main tourism drivers	Related elements
Wine tourism	Cellar doors, wine tours
Natural attractions	Caves, (native) forests, beaches, coastline, natural landscape
Gourmet food and restaurants	Cheese, chocolate, olive oil, gourmet restaurants, farmers market
Beach and surfing	Margaret River Pro, beaches, coastal and beach recreational activities
Heritage & sociocultural factors	Leeuwin lighthouse, lifestyle, art festivals, Indigenous culture
Proximity to Perth	Accessibility from Perth
Leeuwin-Naturaliste national park	Cape to Cape track
Outdoor activities	Bushwalking, hiking, fishing, camping, mountain biking, adventure activities
Accommodation	Chalets, resorts, hotels, short-stay accommodation



Figure 582: Logo of the region's new brand, MRBTA (2015, online)



Figure 593: The destination’s attributes encompassed by Your Margaret River Region brand, Block (2015, online)

In sum, tourism has gained recognition from authorities and residents as a powerful development driver in the region that is able to promote economic diversification and create jobs (Butler, 2004; Pepper, 2007; Quinn, 2009a; Saurine, 2009; Southern Gazette, 2009; The Countryman, 2008). For instance, in 2019 the MRR was recognised as a top destination for the Asia-Pacific market according to Lonely Planet (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2019c, 2019d; Business News, 2019; Busselton - Dunsborough Mail, 2019b). Indeed, public and private investment, as well as the efforts of local tourism bodies and businesses shaped the MRR as an international and diverse tourist destination based on various pull factors – mainly on beach and surf, wine-tourism, and nature-based tourism.

### 8.3. Conceptualising the new regime

Considering the recent history of the MRR as a tourist destination, it is possible to conceptualise the current sociotechnical regime and the rules produced and reproduced by the regime actors. This process is similar to the one followed in Chapter 6 (section 6.3) and aims to determine the core structure of the tourism sociotechnical system. As mentioned in the Chapter 6 (subsection 6.4.4), the last phase of the transition (gradual rearrangement of the regime) is a long-term process as the regime increases its structuration, incremental innovations diffuse, persistent rules from the previous regime disappear or readapt, and the vested interests of the new regime manifest (Derwort et al., 2021; Fuenfschilling and Truffer, 2014; Geels, 2005a).

The rearrangement of the regime has been definitely influenced by the multiple developments at the global scale. As Dwyer and Čavlek (2019) argue, global tourism has been highly influenced by globalisation as a result of neoliberal policies in the last decades. In that sense, the tourism regime in the MRR is not a static arrangement, but a dynamic one in which the forces to bring stability must interact with external and internal actors in a context of globalisation and climate change. This is noted by Fuenfschilling and Binz (2018, p. 736) who claim that “regime rationalities are by no means stable and monolithic, but subject to contestation and power battles by interested actors and therefore continuously socially constructed.” As such, it is expected that the tourism regime at the MRR attempts to maintain its stability by means of interacting with, and if necessary to adapt to, the landscape factors. An example of that, is the incremental green innovation in the region (for instance, solar roofs, permaculture) that do not aim to radically shift the destination towards sustainability but to attract more visitors. As Interviewee 4, an independent researcher, mentioned:

[Sustainable tourism] is not the growth and the sprawl of countless suburbs, it is definitely not the building of roads here and there and huge resorts on the edge of a cliff at the beach, it is definitely not buses and cars [full] of people coming down to then traipse over the forest and check stuff out and surf these waves and leave their trash behind all that sort of stuff. That's not in any way sustainable (...) I certainly don't think [sustainable tourism] is two and a half million people visiting the area a year (...)

[Interviewee 4, March 2022]

Considering that situation, it is necessary to conceptualise the tourism sociotechnical regime at the MRR in order to understand better its current trajectory and rules. In that sense, Figure 64 depicts the new tourism sociotechnical regime as the core structure of the tourism sociotechnical system. While wine-tourism is the main tourism element and plays an important role as regional economic driver, surfing is also part of the regime influencing the destination image and other sectors such as accommodation (coastal holiday homes). The development of nature-based tourism in the region has contributed to maintaining the caves, forests, and coastline as pivotal for the destination image. This type of tourism has also contributed to foster the participation of Aboriginal people in the tourism industry although they still need further support.

Another important feature of the current regime is the source of economic and social capital. For instance, in the previous regime public authorities had a major role in investing in infrastructure and marketing. However, currently they have been relegated by the private sector especially in areas such as marketing and accommodation infrastructure. This is a direct consequence of the neoliberal processes going on worldwide. The effects of global technological changes are also noticeable in the regime. For instance, the MRR is an attractive destination for Asian, UK, and US visitors who can fly directly to Perth and then drive to Busselton and AMR. Another example is in the booking systems which are no longer managed by the WA authorities as in the previous regime, but instead are managed by the MRBTA, private accommodation and tour providers, and even by international companies such as Booking.com, Airbnb, and similar.

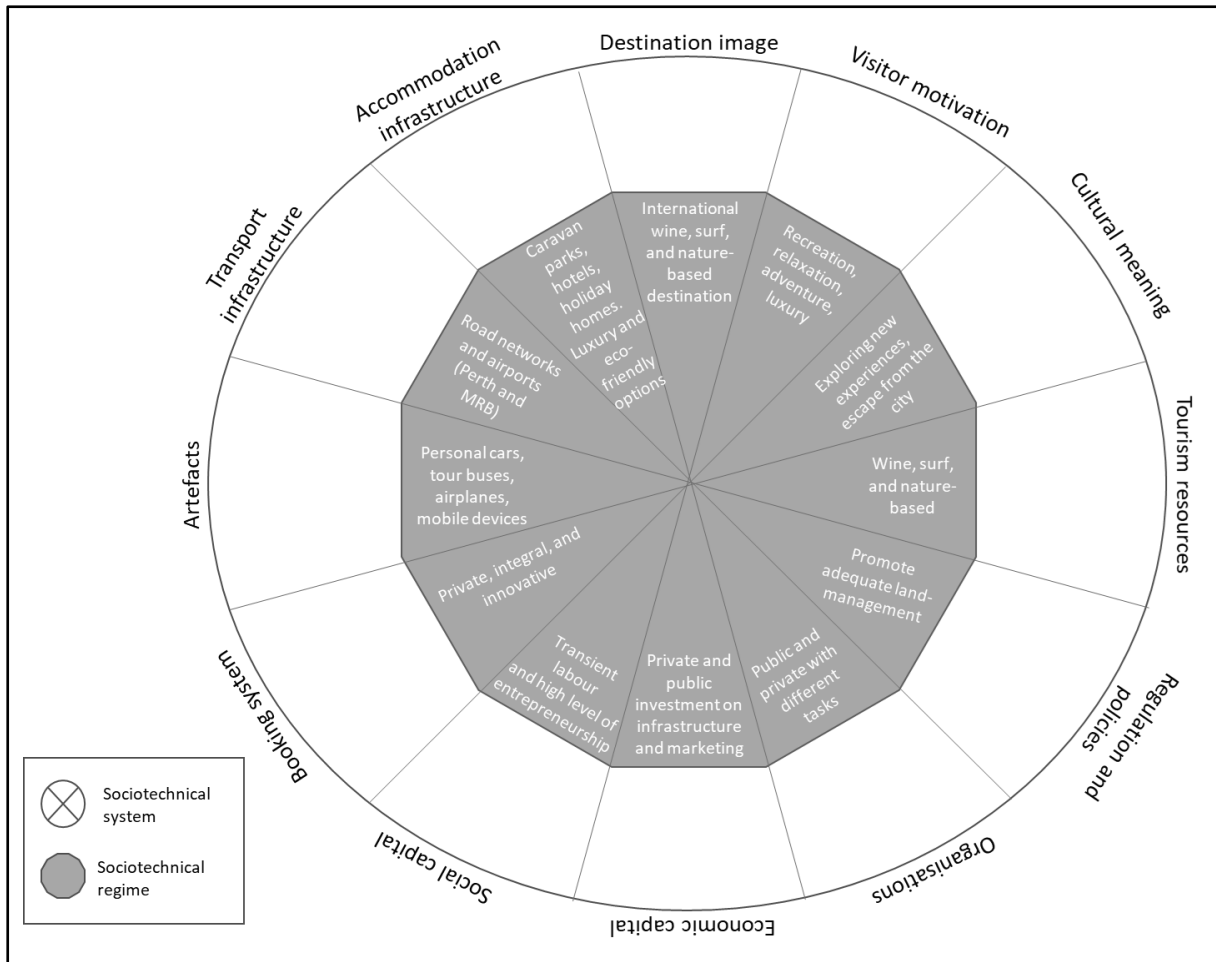


Figure 604: New regime configuration, Author elaboration adapted from Fuenfschilling and Truffer (2014, figure 2)

Likewise, based on the qualitative analysis it is possible to determine what are the main actors involved in the tourism sociotechnical regime and the rules that they produce and reproduce to stabilise the regime. Figure 65 summarises these elements. It is evident that the number and the diversity of actors are larger those that of the previous regime; in turn, the actors are not only within the destination but also outside it. In terms of the rules, the destination image and branding play an important role in the three categories of rules. It determines the *rules of the game* for new businesses, residents advocate for its conservation, and authorities contribute to its maintenance through regulative rules. In turn, some of the rules reflect the negotiations within the regime where power structures manifest. For instance, while tourism authorities and firms foster tourism development, residents oppose such developments in areas considered fragile or of high ecological or social value.



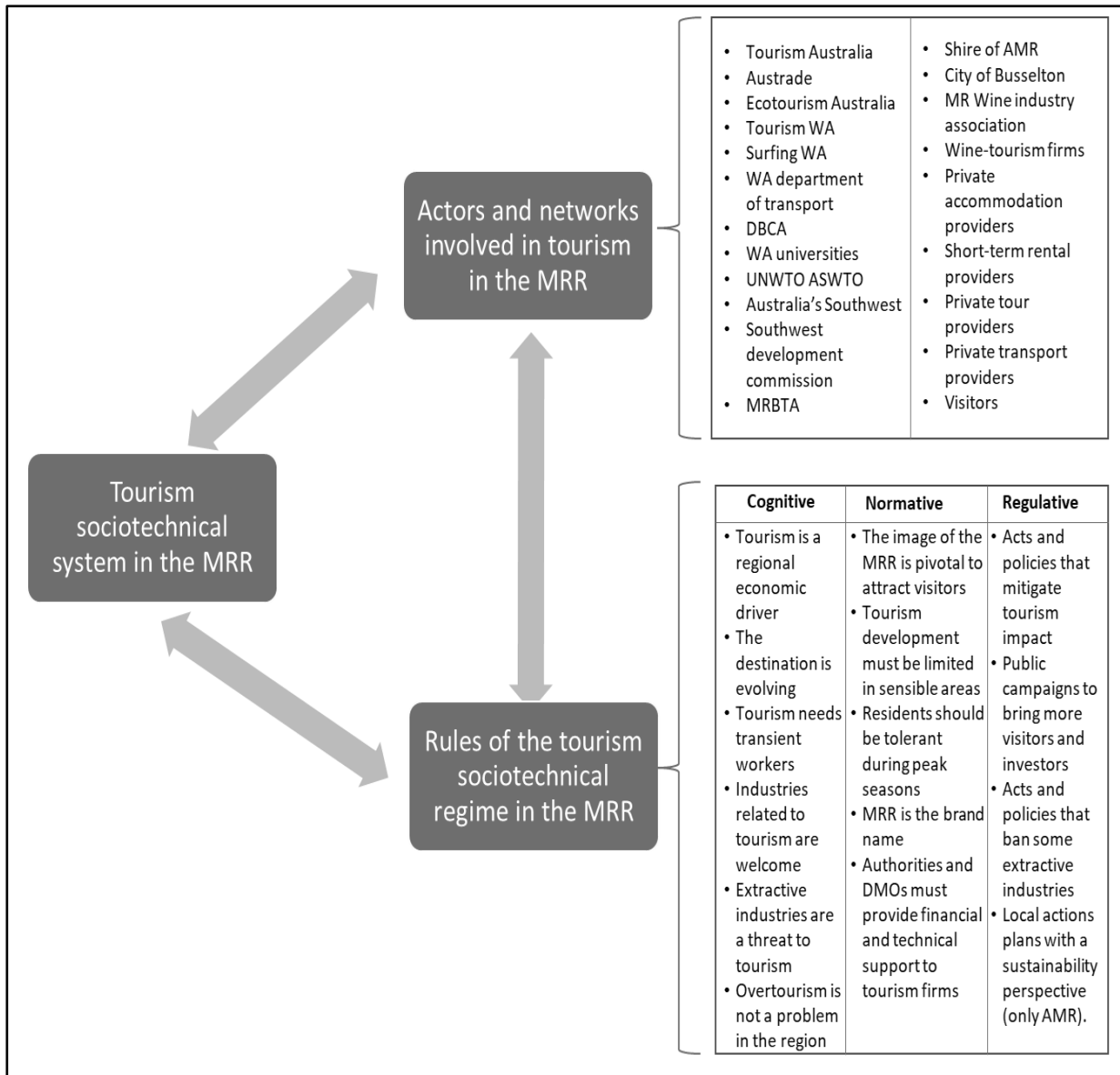


Figure 65: Regime rules in the current destination, Author elaboration based on Geels (2005c, p. 17, figure 1.6)

The regime configuration, rules, and its transformation trajectory based on incremental innovation denotes a path-dependent process. However, as noted in the analysis of sustainability initiatives in Chapter 7, a path-shaping process is also occurring in the MRR which related to the path as process concept (see Garud et al., 2010; Hirsch and Gillespie, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2006). The path-shaping process in the destination manifests as a sustainability transition. The next section addresses that transition.

## 8.4. The transition journey towards sustainable tourism

This section analyses the emerging niches within the destination and the contemporary landscape forces influencing the existing tourism regime in the MRR. Considering Booyens et al.'s (2016a) tourism innovation typology (see Chapter 3), it is possible to identify two local system innovations, namely eco-destination accreditation and grassroots advocacy initiatives from the sustainability initiative list (see Table 19). Following the same phase-logic as in Chapter 6, this section argues that the sustainability transition in the MRR as a tourist destination is entering the second phase. This section has also identified an overlap between the last phase of the previous transition and the phase zero of this sustainability transition. This section refers to this overlapping phase as an interphase period.

### 8.4.1. Interphase period: the overlap of two transitions (1990s – 2000s)

Historical and sustainability transitions are long-term processes that tend to take decades to unfold (Geels, 2004; Köhler et al., 2019). The use of phases is a helpful approach to facilitate the understanding of transitions. However, empirical studies tend to begin the analysis of transitions with a *first phase* that often overlooks the history behind the formation of the existing sociotechnical system. Since this research project accounts for the evolution of the tourism sector for over one hundred years, it is possible to follow the changes that the tourism sociotechnical system has undergone since its emergence in the destination. As such, it is possible to notice an overlap between the last phase of the historical transition (see Chapter 6) and the phase zero of the current unfolding sustainability transition (see Figure 66).

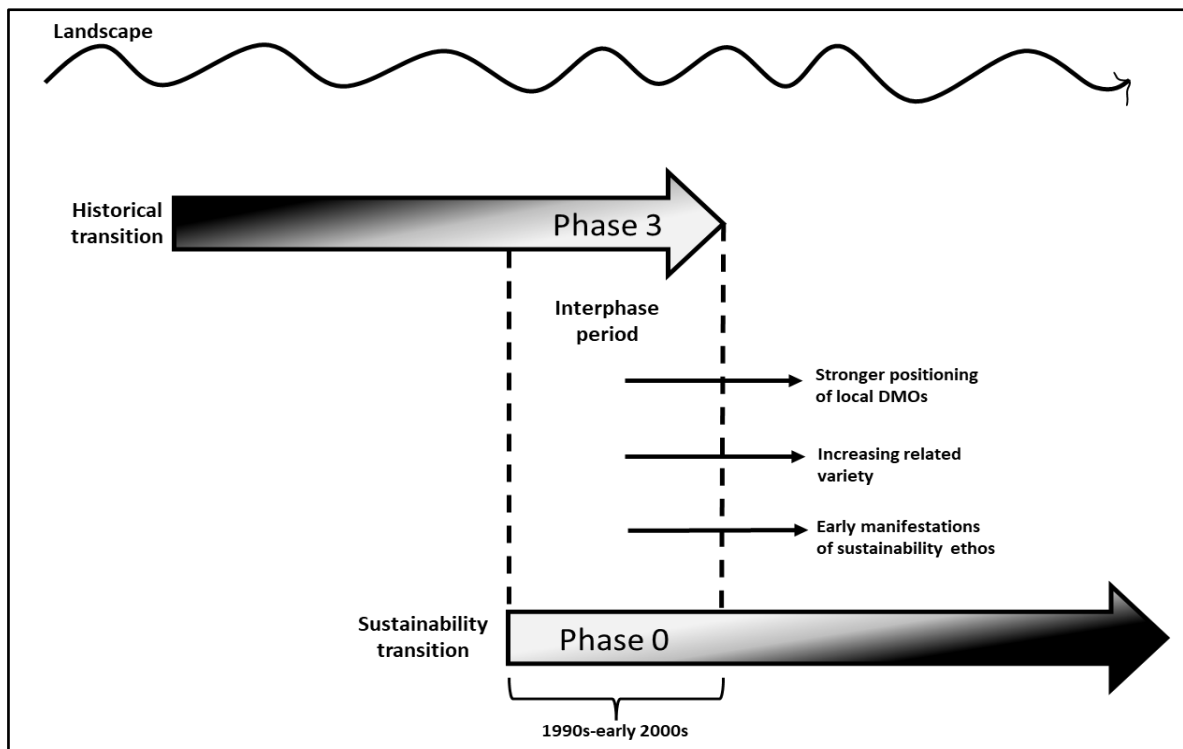


Figure 66: Interphase period

Geels (2004a) refers to the last phase of a transition as the gradual replacement of old regime elements by the new emerging ones. Based on Chapter 6, it is also possible to define a phase zero as a set of pre-existing factors enabling the formation of a regime. This research refers to the overlap of both phases as an interphase period. During this period, it is possible to notice remanent processes of the historical transition leading to the consolidation of the tourism regime based on wine, beach and surf, and nature. The two most important remanent processes have been the stronger positioning of the local destination management organisations (DMOs) and the increasing related variety. Both brought a higher degree of structuration to the regime. For instance, in 1992 the former Busselton Tourist Bureau became Cape Naturaliste Tourism Association whereas in 1998 the Margaret River Tourist Bureaux launched their first official destination website (MRBTA, 2019). While both were already managing caves in Busselton and AMR respectively (see Prosser, 1997), it was in the 1990s that they began to receive further associates which improved their role as representative bodies of the tourism sector within the respective administrative boundaries. In turn, the representative body of the region's wine industry (MRWIA) began to participate in the marketing of

the MRR as a wine tourism destination (Carthew and Mannion, 1999). With regard to related variety, it is possible to notice early emergence and development of gourmet restaurants and products (Anderson, 1998; Carthew, 1999; Foster, 1992b), dairy industry (Sunday Times (Perth), 2001), chocolate industry (The West Australian, 2000; WA Business News, 2003b), olive oil industry (WA Business News, 2003a), music and art festivals (Dortch, 2003; Lang, 2003a; The West Australian, 2003), and luxury amenities (Anderson, 2003; Butler, 2004; Low, 2003).

In turn, the main enabling processes during the phase zero were the early manifestations of the local sustainability ethos in the tourism sector. This ethos, mainly cultivated by the influx of alternative lifestyleers during the 1960s and 1970s, as embodied in incipient demonstrations against tourism development projects and in investment in environmentally friendly tourism businesses. Regarding the former, it is possible to identify an iconic demonstration that took place near Gnarabup beach where residents indicated their rejection against a tourism and housing project that could potentially affect the local environment (Quekett, 2000). The following year residents maintained their complaints about this project (Stevens, 2001). However, during the phase zero these manifestations lacked a clear strategy, leadership, and momentum. Yet, they evidenced local environmental awareness and promptness to participate in conservation activities, which was also noted by Sanders (2006). In terms of the latter, entrepreneurs, inspired by the local sustainability ethos, made risky investments in tourism-related eco-businesses instead of investing in businesses related to wine-tourism which was becoming the most profitable option in the tourism sector (see for instance Ozich, 1998). During phase zero a small number of tourism eco-businesses emerged (see Bell, 2001; Lang, 2003b; Wilson-Clark, 2003) although they were not certified or were not part of major organisations in the destination. The early manifestations of the local sustainability ethos set the cornerstone for the development and structuration of the niches with higher path-shaping potential in the destination.

All in all, this interphase period shaped a stable regime with a clear focus on tourism growth and, at the same time, a growing concern for the destination's natural, and culture and heritage resources. The encounter between a tourism regime focused primarily on economic growth and incipient but promising niches focused on tourism

impact in a more sustainability-aware context is the starting point for the ongoing sustainability transition taking place in the MRR.

#### 8.4.2. Phase one: Emergence of niches in a stable context (2010 – 2019):

Following the consolidation of the tourism regime during phase zero, the current regime exhibited stability and economic growth (MRBTA, 2019). For instance, AMRTA and GBTA merged into the Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association (MRBTA) in 2015 and since then it doubled its efforts to establish a diverse, attractive, sustainable, inclusive, and distinctive destination image (Block, 2015). In addition to MRBTA, tourism businesses received support from public tourism bodies working beyond the destination such as Australia's Southwest and Tourism WA. All of them contributed to strengthen the regime structure. Correspondingly, the tourism regime exhibited a continuous growth since the tourism boom, not only in terms of visitation but also in terms of diversity and institutionalisation. For instance, the tourism regime achieved a blanket ban on coal mining in the MRR in 2012 (Loney and Kerr, 2012). The new regime exhibited incremental innovation. For instance, organisational and marketing innovation, such as new branding, and environmental innovation such as the ban on coal mining. As such, it is possible to note that the current tourism regime was concerned about the image of the destination. As Interviewee 46, manager of an iconic wine-state firm in the region, stated:

[I] feel like it [MRR] is sustainable, but I think that we [tourism stakeholders] need to be careful that we do not, as a region, ruin what people love coming here for, which is the beauty and the isolation and the sense of [place]. I think the MRR is always like you can come down here and exhale (...), rest and relax, but also [to] enjoy beautiful things, beautiful food, beautiful wine, beautiful scenery. And I think that it is really important that we do not *over-cook the goose*.

[Interviewee 46, April 2021]

Meanwhile, at the landscape level, global economic trends such as neoliberalisation, environmental issues such as climate change and the impacts of mass tourism, and policy frameworks such as sustainable development, the SDGs and sustainable tourism, influenced the shape of global tourism. More specifically, it is possible to notice the consolidation of tourism as a global and regional economic driver (McKinsey & Company and World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017; UNWTO and UNEP, 2012) and as an important contributor to global warming (Lenzen et al., 2018). Other relevant global developments were the increasing relevance of the

Chinese market, especially in the Asian-Pacific region (Dichter et al., 2018), massification of booking systems (Dichter, 2018), and the growing awareness of and preference for sustainability-related experiences and services (Booking.com, 2019, 2018, 2017).

As a result, several destinations took measures that reflect these global trends. For instance, popular booking and travel systems provided options to compensate for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, various destinations in the world took steps towards sustainability in order to enhance their natural and sociocultural resources while attracting a growing *green market*, and residents of popular destinations launched movements advocating for stronger regulations to mitigate the impacts of overtourism. The MRR is not isolated from this global shift towards sustainability. In fact, the tourism regime exhibited concerns about the environmental and social impacts of tourism. Yet, the destination remained vulnerable to climate change, and affected by tourism overdevelopment and overtourism in peak seasons, as indicated by interviewees (see also Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020a; Hately, 2022; Jones et al., 2010; Sanders, 2000).

Influenced by landscape shifts towards sustainability, new green niches emerged aiming to shift the existing tourism regime in a more sustainable direction. While the interview analysis identified several innovative practices, most of them fall into the incremental category (related to the regime). In this case it is relevant to review the list of sustainability initiatives identified in the MRR (Table 19). Considering those initiatives, Table 21 analyses them from the perspective of Booyens and Rogerson's (2016a) tourism innovation typology. As noted, there are four main types of innovation in tourism in the MRR (product, process, environmental, social, and structural). All these innovative practices took place during this phase.

Table 21: Type of innovations in tourism in the MRR, based on Booyens and Rogerson (2016a, p. 519, table 4)

Type of innovation	Type of sustainability initiative	Description
Product innovation	Improving accessibility	These initiatives represent improvements to the quality of experiences of visitors in the MRR. The initiatives remain within the firm level and reinforce the tourism regime.
	Improving visitors' experience	
Process innovation	Increasing staff availability	These initiatives entail cooperation between certain firms to attract local but maintaining the focus on transient workers. However, these initiatives do not tackle structural basis of the staffing issue such as housing and better wages.
Environmental innovation	Promoting sustainable businesses	Initiatives that promote environmental innovation have a clear strategy to incorporate specific environmentally friendly practices and infrastructure into their operations. While these initiatives minimise the environmental impacts of tourism in the destination, they do not consider changes at the regime level.
	Promoting sustainable transport	
	Promoting efficient water use and disposal	
	Promoting and using green energy sources	
	Improving waste management	
Social innovation	Addressing housing crisis	These initiatives entail considerations beyond the firm level and address structural features of the destination such as the lack of housing, limited participation of Aboriginal people in the tourism sector, and tackling the tourism pro-growth ideology.
	Engaging Aboriginal people with the tourism sector	
	Conserving natural capital	
Structural innovation	Promoting a sustainable destination	Structural innovations are pivotal for sustainability transitions as they aim to promote radical changes at the destination level. Both types of initiatives aim to promote changes that could foster sustainability shifts across the entire destination.
	Raising visitors' awareness	

Building on Booyens and Rogerson's (2016a) typology it is possible to argue that product, process, and environmental innovations tend to be incremental as they alone do not represent a potential disruption to the existing regime. On the contrary, they tend to reinforce the trajectory of the regime or act as specific fixes in the regime. For instance, some of the sustainability initiatives in the product and environmental innovation only aimed to increase visitation to the region (regional flights, green marketing) rather than calling for action on the environmental and social impacts of tourism. Nevertheless, social and structural innovations do have the potential to disrupt the regime as they can generate structural changes at the destination level. As such, these initiatives could be considered as local innovation systems according to Booyens and Rogerson's typology. During this phase it was possible to identify the emergence of the eco-destination accreditation scheme and grassroots organisations as protected spaces to these social and structural innovations (innovation niches).

On the one hand, the eco-destination accreditation scheme which is a top-down initiative led by the national organisation Ecotourism Australia - a partner of various global organisations such as UNESCO and UNWTO (Ecotourism Australia, 2022). In the MRR, Ecotourism Australia, through the MRBTA and AMR council, supported local tourism firms to become eco-certified, although the most ambitious objective is to certify the entire destination. The role of a regime actor such as the MRBTA probably followed the regime's intention to position the MRR as a worldwide sustainable destination validated by international credentials. However, only AMR took concrete action in that regard (Shire of AMR, 2022). This certification would mean a drastic change for (a part of) the destination. For instance, it would require a constant improvement of sustainability-related practices, including the engagement of Aboriginal people, the promotion of local produce, and the enhancement of natural capital (Ecotourism Australia, 2022). As such, the AMR council developed a number of projects towards that objective that promoted the inclusion of Aboriginal people in the tourism sector, raises visitors' environmental and cultural awareness, and encouraged more eco-accredited tourism businesses (see Shire of AMR, 2022). For the emergence of this niche, the role of intermediary actors (see Chapter 4), such as Ecotourism Australia, MRBTA, and Undalup Association, was pivotal as they



facilitated the transfer of knowledge between global organisations at the landscape level and tourism niches.

On the other hand, there were various grassroots advocacy movements that were bottom-up initiatives mainly led by resident organisations. For instance, Save Smith's Beach and Preserve Gnarabup advocated stopping resort development in sensitive coastal areas (de Kruijff, 2020a; Wesley and Pforr, 2010). However, while they failed in stopping these projects, they managed to reduce their impact on the landscape and to raise environmental awareness across the destination. Those movements have an intermittent and responsive (reactive) nature as they emerge when there is a massive project that is expected to have negative environmental impacts on the destination. These organisations' activities, whether successful or not, have an important social component as they aim to give voice to the local community which is beneficial for the destination. For instance, grassroots organisations (including residents' associations) promoted methodologies to engage authorities in their activities and to raise visitors' awareness about their impact on the destination. These methodologies map on Smith et al.'s (2016) list of grassroots organisations' contributions (Table 11). Interviewee 18, local activist and member of grassroots organisations, commented:

[I] think those groups and activities are aiming at trying to preserve the natural environment [and that] is the major draw that we have for tourism here. In that sense, they are definitely supporting the tourism industry. Even though it sounds like they are against the tourism industry [because they are arguing against tourism development], but no, not really. [They are looking forward to] keeping the environment in such a state that tourists will still want to come here.

[Interviewee 18, March 2021]

As in the previous niche, the role of intermediary actors was relevant for their emergence and to prevent their dispersion and dissolution. The most important ones were Nature Conservation Margaret River and Transition Town Margaret River. Both facilitated the transfer of knowledge between niche actors and promoted the articulation of activities and agendas towards a more sustainable destination. As such, intermediary actors contributed to the conformation of alliances between organisations and increasing niche actors' capabilities. Both also relate to Smith et al.'s (2016) list.

#### 8.4.3. Phase two: Incipient institutionalisation process (2020 – onwards):

At the regime level, tourism has been developing a number of incremental innovations driven mainly by public and private incentives, and sustainability-related values brought by the influx of new residents in the 1960s and 1970s. Those innovations include initiatives that could be categorised as product, process, and environmental innovations (see Table 21) (see Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a). However, those initiatives are adopted at the firm level and not across the destination. However, the adoption of these initiatives indicates that the regime is aware of the changes happening at the landscape level such as climate change and growing environmental awareness.

In turn, at the niche level, Busselton has shown interest in engaging with eco-destination accreditation (Interviewees 12 and 51), which could lead to the institutionalisation of the initiative at the destination level. Likewise, there are similar top-down projects to shift the entire destination such as the Geopark initiative (Interviewee 9) where the MRBTA is playing an important role. That initiative would incorporate sustainability standards defined by UNESCO over the region due to its geological significance (UNESCO, 2019). In turn, the grassroots initiatives have been strengthening their linkages with external and more resourceful institutions such as Surfrider Foundation and WA Forest Alliance (Interviewees 4 and 19), although they still receive support from intermediary actors such as Nature Conservation Margaret River and Transition Town Margaret River. Plus, there are strong links and overlaps between these initiatives and the local politicians driving sustainability initiatives in AMR Shire Council, which indicates an incipient institutionalisation (Interviewee 4). Nonetheless, once again, there appears to be a growing differentiation between the AMR and Busselton. In summary, these recent developments reaffirm the relevance of grassroots initiatives in the transition towards a sustainable destination despite their intermittent nature. The latter represents a hurdle to further their degree of cooperation, coordination, and institutionalisation in the destination. In that sense, it is important to consider the role of intermediary actors in this regard as the sustainability transition unfolds.

While the progress made so far places the sustainability transition of tourism in the MRR at the beginning of the second phase, further commitment from federal, WA, and local political actors; local firms; residents; and even visitors is still required. For instance, emerging niches continue to face strong barriers due to uneven commitment to sustainability between AMR and Busselton, unclear leadership at the destination level, the proliferation of short-stay accommodation, and a risk of overreliance on tourism. Despite these barriers, by the end of 2019 the destination was achieving a positive economic performance while taking decisive steps towards sustainable tourism. For instance, the destination received international recognition (Business News, 2019; Street, 2019), visitation numbers and international investment noted an outstanding growth (Kirk, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d; MRBTA, 2019), public investment and private interest in the regional airport increased (Kirk, 2019e), more Asian tourists visited the destination (Asia News Monitor, 2019; Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2019e; King, 2019; MRBTA, 2019; Pearlman, 2019), tourism firms were taking steps towards sustainability in relation to eco-certification (Curtin University News, 2021), and the AMR became the second LGA accredited as an eco-destination (Shire of AMR, 2022). Yet, in 2020 a major unexpected landscape shock occurred, namely the COVID-19 pandemic. This event emerged and developed while the phase two was taking place interrupting the processes taking place at the regime and niche level. Its impact on the destination and on the ongoing sustainability transition is addressed in the next subsection.

#### 8.4.4. A pause in the transition: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

This subsection has two aims. The first aim is to describe and analyse the impact of the pandemic on the destination whereas the second aim is to indicate the potential pathways that the destination might follow after the pandemic. In that sense, the latter will discuss the implications of the pandemic in the continuation of the ongoing sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR.

To understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the MRR, it is important to define the main related events that took place from the late 2019 onwards. On 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) became officially concerned with atypical cases of pneumonia in the Wuhan province in People's Republic of China (WHO, 2022). Two weeks later, on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2020, the first cases of

COVID-19 were reported in Australia in the states of Victoria and New South Wales (Knowlton, 2022). By February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Qantas Group (airline company) had announced the cancellation of flights coming from China (Contify Aviation News, 2020). Nevertheless, it did not halt the spread of the virus. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the first victim of COVID-19 was reported in Western Australia. Soon, on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, the WHO was declaring a global pandemic which has had an immense death toll globally (Knowlton, 2022; WHO, 2022). Evidently, industries and sectors were not strange to this global event. One of the most affected sectors was tourism, although its impact has not been the same across all destinations globally.

To put this research project in context, it is necessary to indicate that the fieldwork stage of the research took place in parallel with the development of the COVID-19 pandemic in the MRR. Indeed, the interview stage began in February 2021 while Australia, Western Australia, and the MRR were under travel bans and lockdowns that were changing even from one week to another. As such, the perspective of the interviewees about the impact of the pandemic could have been affected by the ongoing and unfolding events. Nonetheless, it is possible to determine a clear pattern in the findings. As the authorities began to establish hard policies to prevent the spread of the virus – that had never happened in this new millennium – actors in the tourism sector exhibited a pessimistic stance. However, as vaccination programmes became promising and hard policies were gradually relaxed, the tourism sector exhibited a cautious optimism. Interviewee 17, a resident and member of a local sustainability network, described the impact as follows:

[COVID-19] has been an interesting riot because we are quite tourism dependent. When the first lockdown happened this time last year (March 2020) people freaked out quite terribly because everything got stacked and stalled and nothing seemed to go on and people were very afraid to lose their jobs and income, then there was the emerging of reconnection with town which was interesting because we had no tourists and only locals were around (...) so as soon as the first restrictions were lifted and the Perth metropolitan area opened and people were allowed to come down here again we were flooded and we have been flooded since (...) it has been a boom time for all the tourism businesses (...)

[Interviewee 17, March 2021]

As noted, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been punctual or static in time, instead they have changed due to the dynamic measures taken at the state and federal level. The data analysis identified two main impacts on the destination: first, the abrupt reduction of international and interstate visitors due to the closure of borders; and second, the promotion of innovation

Clearly, the MRR as a destination with a strong focus on international and interstate markets was disrupted by the pandemic (see, for instance, Duke, 2020). The shut-down of tourism in the MRR between May and June meant a massive economic loss for the sector. For instance, tourism firms struggled to pay their workers and maintain their operations, and key regional events were cancelled (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020b, 2020c; Barbara, 2020; Kirk, 2020c). A representative of the Department of Premier and Cabinet involved with WA's recovery strategy (Interviewee 29) described the situation as follows:

[W]hen we (WA state) had the restrictions, our intrastate borders were closed, which just stopped a lot of the tourism that was going down south. And that really impacted the tourism industry, especially the Southwest, as you know, the cafes, restaurants, food tourism, they were on lockdown (...) it was certainly an impact, probably more in WA's southwest than it was in the north (...)

[Interviewee 29, May 2021]

Indeed, the initial measures to control the spread of virus halted the whole tourism sector in the MRR (wine-tourism, surfing, events, tours) that survived mainly due to Federal government's support such as Job Keeper and Job Seeker (Kirk, 2020d, 2020d, 2020e). By the end of May 2020, regional borders reopened which allowed people living in WA to travel within the state (de Kruijff, 2020b; Laschon, 2020). As a result, the tourism sector in the MRR witnessed a major recovery based on intrastate travel (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020b, 2020c; Contify Aviation News, 2020; Curtis, 2020; Kirk, 2020c, 2020d; Sinclair, 2020; The Australian, 2020). Yet, the interstate and international border remained closed until March 2022 (Carmody and Weber, 2022; Towie, 2021). This means that the MRR – and WA – did not receive international visitors for approximately two years, and that firms dependent on international markets struggled to operate. For instance, Interviewee 39, a local spirits and tourism entrepreneur, mentioned:

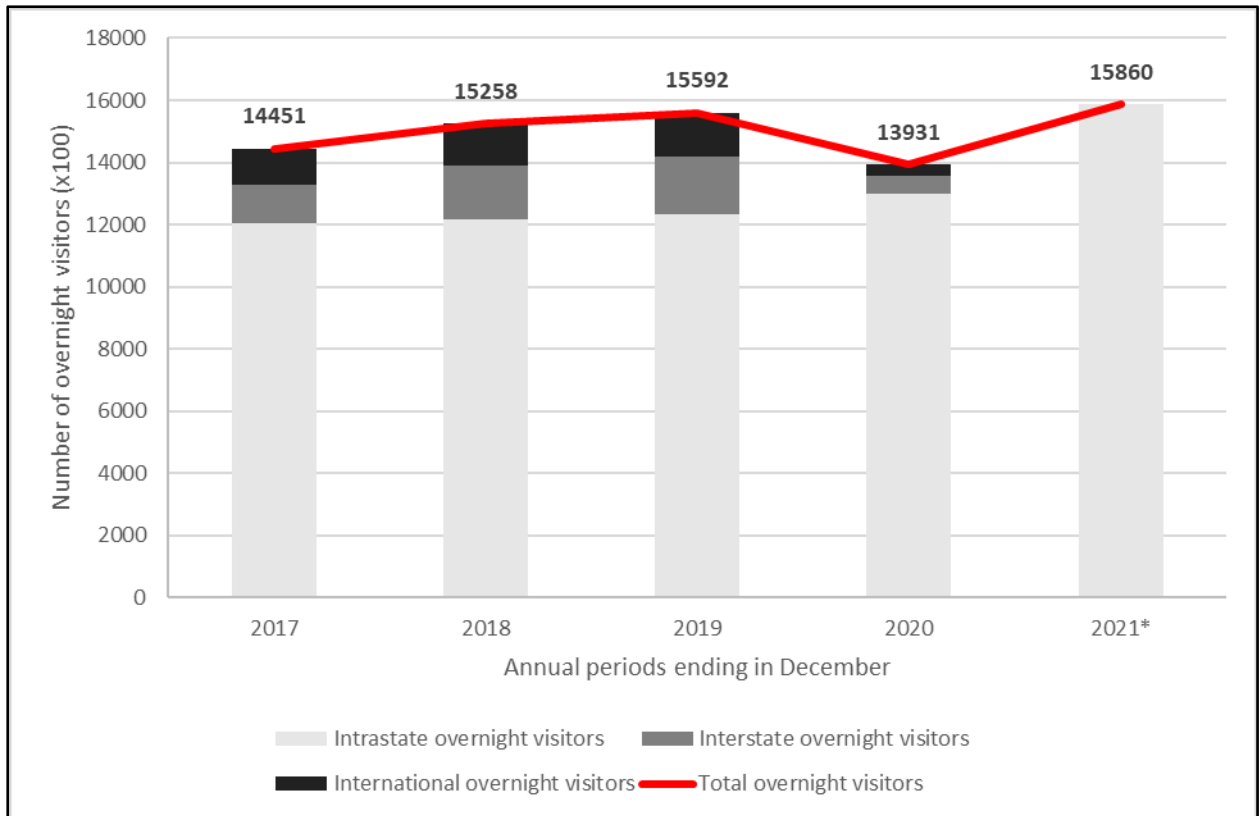
[I] think probably one of the key COVID related things is lack of access to international markets (...) We cannot go on travel, zoom just does not do the same. So, actually developing our international markets for export is quite difficult at the moment, which also means the tourism accommodation side of it [is affected].

[Interviewee 39, June 2021]

Once the interstate borders opened, the MRR received a large number of domestic visitors (Sinclair, 2020; The Australian, 2020). Indeed, Figure 67 presents the evolution of international, interstate, and intrastate visitation to the MRR between 2017 and 2021 based on information processed by MRBTA. As noted, 2020 was the lowest year in visitation during that period due to the abrupt closure of international and interstate borders, and the uncertainty of tourism businesses about changes in measures to prevent the spread of the virus. As explained by Interviewee 8, a representative of a regional DMO:

[T]he uncertainty of not knowing whether they [tourism firms] should be keeping their staff, whether they should be letting stuff go, or if the tourists are still going to come, or if the borders actually closed (...) A lot of our members were in this state of not knowing how to move forwards (...) There were cash flow issues because a lot of international and interstate visitors were cancelling their visit [especially] in some smaller businesses (...) because they did not have a pot of money to refund people their deposits. So that [uncertainty] was a big issue.

[Interviewee 8, April 2021]



*Figure 617: Visitation numbers to the MRR (2017-2021), based on MRBTA (2022)*  
 \* Data for 2021 does not differentiate between interstate and intrastate, although due to the border restrictions it is possible to infer that most of visitors fall into the intrastate category.

However, as noted in the same figure, despite the reduction in the number of interstate and international visitors, the total number of visitors only reduced by 10 % compared to the previous year. Even more important to notice is that in the 2021 period with interstate and international borders still closed, the visitation slightly surpassed the visitation of the last pre-COVID-19 year. Hence, it is understandable that several residents interviewed were disgusted with the high levels of visitation in the destination after having experienced a destination without many visitors for some months. For instance, Interviewee 24, a local activist and resident of the MRR, stated:

[I] just stay home. When I go down the road, you just get all the supplies and stay home, it is not very pleasant. You cannot find parking anywhere; you cannot go any of the places you like going to because they are full of people. And some of the places that are not officially open to the public (...) people are there because of social media (...) there are queues and queues and queues of people waiting to get on a rock to look at the ocean. This is mad!

[Interviewee 24, April 2021]

The increasing and unexpected number of visitors after intrastate borders opened, did not only trigger some complaints from residents but meant an immense challenge for tourism firms as the usual labour force has significantly reduced. Indeed, during the period the international borders were closed the labour shortage in the region, although not a new problem (Crispin, 2014), became an even more concerning issue in the MRR (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020d, 2020e; Lefebvre, 2020a). As Interviewee 31 indicates:

(...) The major impact of COVID-19 has been an extension of the season (...) they haven't had a break since COVID-19 started, because - apart from the very early stages, when we were all in lockdown - (...) as a result, the tourism has very much been intrastate, which has meant the Margaret River has not had a break from constant visitation for a long period of time now almost a year (...) and their workforce, which has largely been international backpackers, the workforce that has really helped relieve them during the high visitation times, has not been accessible (...)

[Interviewee 31, February 2021]

The increasing visitation made tourism businesses work longer hours or close their doors (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020d; Lefebvre, 2020a). The situation was worse for businesses demanding qualified staff, which is mainly international, as processes to obtain Australian visas took longer than usual (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020d; Lefebvre, 2020a). This situation brought firms' interest in local labour with support of campaigns from the WA government (Augusta - Margaret River Mail, 2020e; Lefebvre, 2020a). However, local labour demanded better wages to cope with the housing issue in the MRR as described in Chapter 7.

Closely related to the previous impact, it is possible to argue that the COVID-19 pandemic promoted innovation in the destination. Although it was not necessarily related to sustainability, such innovation demonstrates the high levels of entrepreneurship in the destination. For instance, businesses, mainly in the wine industry (including wine-tourism firms), sought new channels to sell their products such as virtual tours and wine tasting experiences (Hayes, 2020; Lefebvre, 2020b). In addition to this marketing innovation (see Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a), COVID-19 has raised awareness about the relevance of the local market. Although this consequence of the pandemic does not appear, at first sight, as a type of innovation in tourism, it has the potential to transform tourism regime rule. In fact,



increasing attention to the local market can motivate destination marketing strategies to be better tailored to the needs of domestic visitors to retain their interest in the MRR and prolong their stay. In that sense, a focus on the local market could fall into the structural type of innovation in tourism (see Booyens and Rogerson, 2016a). For instance, an independent researcher (Interviewee 7) argued:

[T]he COVID-19 pandemic would encourage the tourism in the region to be more locally reliant and less reliant upon remote visitation (...) so, the local people [local authorities] can promote the idea of tourism in your neighbourhood or in your backyard and perhaps moving a little bit inland to the coastal and having a couple of weeks locally on vacations. I do not think that COVID-19 will have more influence beyond that (...)

[Interviewee 7, February 2021]

Regarding the ongoing sustainability transition, the COVID-19 pandemic entailed an abrupt pause. Brouder (2020) argues that the recovery of destinations after the impact of the pandemic could follow different pathways. The interview analysis focused on the expected trajectories post-COVID-19. According to the analysis, three main potential pathways were identified. A business-as-usual (BAU), an economic-focused, and a sustainable MRR. These visions of the future are relevant as argued by Hassink et al. (2019). According to them, visions about the future can influence decision-making, policymaking, advocacy, and community actions to avoid or favour the achievement of a particular future scenario.

The BAU future refers to a recovery of the tourism sector back to the trajectory prior to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This scenario is similar to that identified by Hall et al. (2020) and based on past pandemic recovery strategies at a smaller scale. According to this view, the three levels of government work towards palliating specific issues worsened by the pandemic such as housing, labour shortage, and local economic stagnation. The interviewees provided examples that support their concern about this future. For instance, federal and WA State government programmes such as Jobseeker, Jobkeeper, and Wonder out and Yonder were only temporary and aimed only as emergency strategies without paying attention to deep structural issues underpinning the MRR's challenges (see Chapter 7). Another example that describes this vision is one interviewee's experience (Interviewee 4, a local environmental activist and researcher). The participant mentioned that during the regional lockdown (March – June) a tourism hotel supported by a non-profit

organisation provided shelter to homeless people (some of them as a result of the worsening housing crisis in the MRR) (see Mangan and Hyman, 2021). However, as the regional borders opened, the hotel stopped providing shelter and immediately went back to business. According to the Interviewee 4, these cases reflected a clear intention of authorities and the tourism sector in general to *bounce back* to its trajectory once the pandemic had been totally addressed. Interviewee 7 summarised this BAU vision as follows:

[I] do not think there will be a specific link between COVID 19 recovery and [sustainable] tourism thrive. There would be a sort of a *starting with a blank sheet* and say we are ok. We are now moving out of the COVID-19 era and there is a lot of BAU stuff.

[Interviewee 7, February 2021]

The second vision entails a recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with a prioritisation of the economy. This vision is one of the potential paths that some scholars suggested for post-COVID-19 destinations in general (see, for instance, Brouder, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020). However, while the first vision acknowledges that a return to BAU would also mean to continue with the sustainability initiatives that were taking place in the MRR, this vision considers that those sustainability initiatives might be threatened by incumbent actors. According to the interviewees there are two clear examples that suggest that the MRR might follow an economic-focused path. The first is the increasing influx of new residents able to afford the increasing cost of housing in order to escape from the city and from the pandemic. This type of new residents is referred to as VESPA (virus escapees seeking provincial Australia). Interviewee 37, a representative of an LGA, elaborated on this phenomenon:

[The MRR] is a really attractive area so it attracts people to move here. So, we have got a very steady population growth rate of around 3 % every year and I think that has probably been exacerbated by COVID. There is this phenomenon termed VESPA, so there are a lot of people moving here (...) so there has been the combination of COVID-19 and the building stimulus grants that the government, the federal and state governments, have launched which has resulted in this flurry of construction activity down here at the moment, almost double the amount of building that would normally take place across the year. That constant pressure from increasing population of residents makes it challenging to manage its impact upon our farmland, and to ensure that it is not encroaching upon our conservation state.

[Interviewee 37, March 2021]

As noted, the influx of VESPA residents to the MRR follows a public economic stimulus in the construction sector in the entire country. While the positive outcomes of this approach are acknowledged (recover the country's economy and generate jobs) (see Cox, 2020; Government of WA, 2020), it represents management challenges for LGAs with environmental and social repercussions. By the same token, the second example entails the WA government's support for a five-star tourism development project in Gnarabup Beach. The state authorities believe that this iconic project does not only generate jobs, which is pivotal to recover from the pandemic, but that it also improves the destination brand (see Murray, 2020). According to interviewees, while the destination needs this type of projects, the environmental and social considerations appear to have been neglected in favour of the economic gains (see also Chapter 7). In sum, according to this perspective about the future, the authorities at the state and federal level will have a clear and sole focus on the economic side, at least until the pandemic has been overcome. For instance, a representative of Tourism WA (Interviewee 31) mentioned:

[The] Margaret River COVID-19 recovery will not be one where we see it as an opportunity to transition to sustainability, I am afraid. Purely because that is not an ambition of the [WA] State government. I am not saying the state government does not see it, [but] I think the state government is more worried about financial sustainability of livelihood, work, jobs, and all of that. So, they cannot see the elements of the environment, and the elements of the social benefits of recovery as totally a major thing that they can put into a Margaret River recovery scheme. As a result, I do not believe there will be huge benefits. So, it is just a fact of life; we are limited by the money we have.

[Interviewee 31, February 2021]

By contrast to the previous two visions, the third pathway maps into sustainability transitions. According to the interviewees supporting this future vision, the COVID-19 pandemic – despite its impact – has given the destination and its decisionmakers an opportunity to reset and begin a more efficient and effective incorporation of sustainability into the tourism sector. This future scenario is also claimed by tourism scholars for destinations in general (Brouder, 2020; Nepal, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020). According to the interviewees, there are two main reasons to believe in and support this potential future scenario. First, the AMR and the MRBTA have continued their efforts to shape a more sustainable MRR during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand the AMR council had the opportunity to successfully pursue the eco-

destination accreditation, and on the other hand, the MRBTA has been encouraging businesses to maintain their sustainability practices and to become eco-accredited. The latter included an economic subsidy. For instance, Interviewee 45, a local tourism eco-entrepreneur argued that:

[I] guess local governments going to go down the sustainable [path] (...) I think AMR has done that [reinforce a sustainable destination discourse]. That bit with the local council for sure is great. I think Margaret River has relied on tourism for a very long time and I think most counsellors and people that live there, acknowledge that and welcome it [a recovery including sustainable tourism].

[Interviewee 45, April 2021]

The second reason relates to global changes because of the pandemic. For instance, interviewees indicated that the halt of tourism globally has allowed visitors and tourism stakeholders to realise about the importance of the natural environment. As such, environmentally aware visitors are expected to increase which would trigger more efforts in the MRR to incorporate sustainability initiatives and practices into their operations. Interviewee 51 reflected about this global change:

[I] think tourists are looking to feel good about travel in the future. I think that visitors will be looking for places to go that are clean, green, and safe. And when they leave, they feel like the money they have paid to come here is going towards good things. So, I think the MRR has always had a good grade name (...) and people will be looking for that going (...) So, I think that the MRR will be a place that people want to come to (...)

[Interviewee 51, March 2021]

An important emerging pattern in this future vision is, surprisingly, related to tourism degrowth (see Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). Although, at this point and within the scope of the research, it is not possible to conclusively identify the strength and potential of this stance, it is an interesting area for further analysis. According to Interviewees 4, 23, 24, and 40, this future scenario is the real form of sustainability and would require radical structural changes of the tourism sector at the destination and global scales. For instance, Interviewee 4 mentioned:

[W]e need a complete systemic transformation (...) I spent four years on council trying to do very aggressive, reformist work over a patriarchal colonial capitalist system, which is local government, and came out the other end, just realising that we cannot. Reforming and changing that system is impossible, because it is completely grounded in colonialism, in white supremacy, in patriarchy, and in capitalism (...) so we need to completely change the way that we structure ourselves as people in our relationship with the environment and our relationship with each other and how we govern ourselves. So, *degrowth* is absolutely part of that (...) A degrowth trajectory is about really interrogating and dismantling the systems that uphold power in its unjust forms and shifting into something that is completely new (...)

[Interviewee 4, March 2022]

As the impact of COVID-19 is relatively recent, it is uncertain to determine if it could be a triggering event (see Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017) for the emergence of new industries or the destruction of existing ones. Nevertheless, it has highlighted the importance of the domestic market, the need to promote local labour in the tourism sector, and the important role of sustainability initiatives to advocate for a recovery pathway based on sustainability and not the opposite. Considering the three potential pathways identified, the sustainability-related pathway would entail the continuation of the phase two of the transition – a process that would increase the degree of structuration of the emerging niches to eventually achieve a phase three. In that phase, it is expected that the innovation niches will gain enough momentum to disrupt the tourism regime. Figure 68 illustrates the two phases of this sustainability transition and presents the possible pathways deriving from the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. At this stage, the transformational potential of the pandemic appears weak as it would require following the evolution of the sustainability transition in the MRR for more years as the phases unfold. The only element that can be inferred is that the pandemic has resulted neither in the disintegration of grassroots organisations nor a disinterest of local authorities (AMR) and DMO to engage with eco-accreditations.

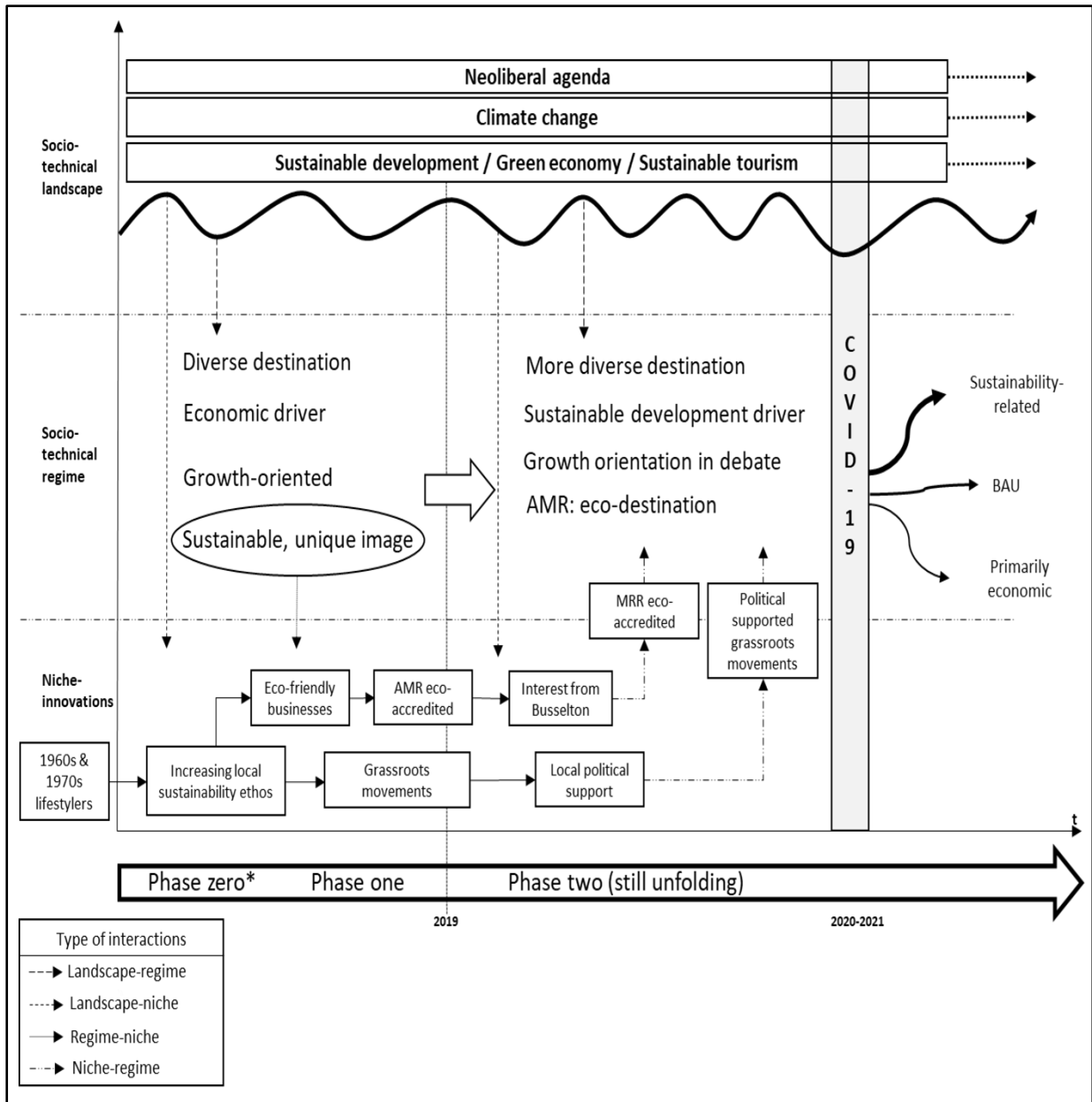


Figure 628: Second transition in the MRR based on Derwort et al. (2021, p. 689, figure 8) (\*)Phase zero is already elaborated in detail in Figure 63.

## 8.5. Typology of transition pathways

This penultimate section revisits the sustainability transition in tourism taking place in the MRR with a different lens. This section uses the typology of transition pathways to analyse the interrelations between niches, regimes, and landscape considering their timing and nature. The former refers to the degree of development of the niches by the time landscape forces have opened windows of opportunity in the dominant regime. The latter refers to the type of relations between the regime and landscape (reinforcing or disruptive) and the regime and niches (competitive or symbiotic). A similar analysis of the historical transition was made in Chapter 6.

During the first phase of the sustainability transition it is possible to notice that the impact of the neoliberalisation process placed tourism as a pivotal economic driver at the destination. As such, the regime focused on increasing visitation by means of offering a diverse range of experiences, products, and services. In turn, the growing concern about climate change, and interest in sustainability were influential landscape forces changing the regime and helping niches to unfold. In the case of the regime, these landscape forces promoted a higher consideration for green – although incremental – innovations and sustainable development in order to shape a clean and green destination brand. By contrast, the not-fully-structured niches noticed that a stronger sustainability stance was needed to balance tourism-based economic growth and the conservation of the region's environment and residents' wellbeing. Importantly, the regime rules towards branding the MRR as a green destination also influenced the niches. Niches were interested in the materialisation of the regime green discourse which manifested in protests and advocacy activities. For instance, it is possible to notice a small demonstration demanding more effective actions from authorities to protect the region's coastal landscape in line with their green destination branding objective.

During the first phase the landscape forces were gradually pressurising the regime in multiple forms. While the neoliberal agenda was reinforcing the regime, climate change and sustainability were progressively disrupting the regime. In turn, the relationship between niches and regime was also mixed. On the one hand, the relative positive influence of some regime rules, related to the destination brand and

image (see section 8.3), on niches could be an indicator of a symbiotic relationship. As such, it was possible to notice the coexistence of incipient green tourism businesses with the more developed wine-tourism and surf-tourism businesses. However, on the other hand, grassroots organisations pushing for a strong sustainability approach would represent a competitive relationship between regime and niches. Yet, at this first phase the niches were disempowered and unstructured. This changed in the following phase when niches receive support from regime actors in the case of the accreditation process and from local political actors in the case of grassroots organisations.

Hence, until the COVID-19 pandemic, it was possible to notice a transformation pathway during the first phase of the sustainability transition as the regime was aware of landscape changes and it slightly modified its direction by means of incorporating incremental green innovation. However, as niches became more structured and landscape factors (sustainability, environmentally aware visitors, and climate change) became more pressing as a disruptive force during the second phase, the regime became less cohesive and some of its components were more likely to incorporate measures and practices in line with sustainable tourism. This can be seen in how tourism businesses who were at first reluctant to shift to green practices decided to engage with sustainable tourism due to the AMR's eco-accreditation initiative. During the second phase, it is possible to notice signs of an early reconfiguration pathway. However, the reconfiguration pathway, as well as the second phase, were interrupted in early 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic appeared as a shock-type landscape force according to Suarez and Olivia's (2005) typology of environmental changes (see Chapter 4). From a sustainability transitions perspective, shock-type landscape forces are rapid, intense, and unexpected (see Geels and Schot, 2007), which clearly related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic globally and at the MRR. As discussed in subsection 8.4.4, the pandemic initially halted all activities in the destination and progressively opened the borders allowing the regime to adapt to a massive domestic visitation. Nonetheless, such adaptation also worsened the challenges growing in the background of the tourism sector such as the housing crisis, overdependence on transient labour force, and a growing focus on international



markets. In turn, the pandemic and the measures involved meant an opportunity for residents, many of them part of the tourism regime (tourism business owners and/or workers as well as local authorities) and niches (grassroots organisations, local eco-entrepreneurs), to reencounter with the destination and re-evaluate the impacts that tourism growth had over the last two decades. While it is not possible to conclusively define which of the three pathways identified in subsection 8.4.4 is going to be followed by the destination, the fact that the pandemic did not dismantle niches and drew the regime's attention to overlooked problems, provides a cautious optimism about the upcoming sustainability transition phases. From the typology of transitions pathways, it is possible to claim that COVID-19 has potentially improved the conditions for the reconfiguration pathway that was taking place in the second phase. It means that the regime has not weakened but has increased its awareness about existing sustainability issues and this could allow highly structured niches to overcome the regime and replace elements within the tourism sociotechnical system.

## **8.6. Summary and conclusions**

This chapter focused on the recent history of the destination to uncover the current tourism sociotechnical regime and the rules that constraint its current trajectory. This regime is not only more complex than its predecessor, but it also presents a higher degree of institutionalisation and a larger network of actors. As such, the new tourism regime in the MRR exhibits the same characteristics as other sociotechnical regimes: a potential lock-in trajectory, incremental innovation, and minor adjustments to maintain a stable trajectory (Geels, 2011). In parallel to the path-dependent process possibly leading to a new lock-in in the destination, various niches with orientation towards sustainable tourism and sustainable development have emerged in the MRR mainly encouraged by the sustainability ethos increasingly growing since the 1970 (see Chapter 6). This chapter analysed also analysed the sustainability transition taking place in the MRR and concluded that the destination reached a second phase of its transition based on Geels's (2004a) phases of transition. Unfortunately, the second phase was abruptly interrupted by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the interviewees, there are three possible recovery pathways from the pandemic: BAU, economic-focused, and sustainability-related. Most of the interviewees agree that the third pathway would bring the destination closer to a sustainable future.

In terms of theoretical contributions this chapter continues to demonstrate the applicability and usefulness of an EEG / MLP framework to analyse the evolution of tourism destination. In this chapter in particular another theoretical contribution is the interphase period which takes place when the last phase of a previous transition overlaps with the beginning of a new transition. A third contribution, relevant for the application of the MLP on tourism evolution, is the usefulness of Booyens and Rogerson's (2016a) typology of tourism innovation. As a result, this chapter could identify niches with the potential to promote systematic changes at the destination level.

This chapter complements Chapter's 7 answer to the first research question. While Chapter 7 indicated that the region was doing progress towards becoming a sustainable destination, this chapter concludes that such progress can be placed in the second phase of Geel's (2004a) transition phases. This chapter can also add that the continuation of the phases depends on the decisions made about the destination's post-COVID-19 recovery. By means of addressing the impact of the pandemic in the destination and in the ongoing sustainability transition, this chapter answers the fifth research question. The transformative potential of the COVID-19 to foster sustainability transition in the destination is yet to be seen. However, at this stage, if the destination follows a pathway related to sustainability it is possible that more windows of opportunity will open for the niches to produce systematic changes in the existing tourism regime.

## Chapter 9.

### The Margaret River region: between path-dependence and path-creation

*“Workforce have historically been backpackers that would come and do the wine and tourism jobs”*

*(Interviewee, 13)*

#### 9.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presents a Margaret River region as a tourist destination in transition towards a sustainable future. As any sustainability transition, the transition in tourism in the MRR is a complex process as there is a regime resisting change, a landscape in change putting pressure on the regime, and niches expecting opportunities to transform the regime. Transitioning to a sustainable destination is not an easy task as it requires breaking with path-dependent forces that are embedded at the destination maintaining the regime configuration. This chapter draws the attention to the underlying path-dependent and path-shaping forces. While the former attempt to constrain the region's trajectory, the latter aims to break with that trajectory and create a new path guided by sustainable tourism and sustainable development. As such, this chapter directly addresses the third and fourth research questions and complements the answers provided by Chapter 6. Regarding the third research question, this chapter provides the path-dependent factors self-reinforce the destination's evolution. In terms of the fourth research question, this chapter indicates the path-shaping factors favouring a sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR. In addition to the identification of path-dependent and path-shaping factors, this chapter analyses each of them.

In that sense, the remainder of this chapter consists of three sections. Sections 9.2 and 9.3 present the underlying path-dependent and path-shaping forces at the destination respectively. The final section (section 9.4) summarises the findings.

## 9.2. Path-dependent factors

Fuenfschilling and Truffer (2014) explain that the regime is the core structure of a sociotechnical system that is produced and reproduced by involved actors and networks of actors. Such production and reproduction of the regime amounts into its stabilisation and resistance to change, which is one of the characteristics of any regime (see for instance Geels, 2011; Geels and Schot, 2007; Köhler et al., 2019). Geels (2011, p. 25) indicated that “consumer lifestyles and preferences may have become adjusted to existing technical systems (...) [that] create path-dependence and make it difficult to dislodge existing systems.” In that sense, it is possible to infer that sociotechnical regimes are stabilised by a set of path-dependent factors that constrain it into a particular trajectory. The interview and documentary analyses have identified factors ranging in nature from social, political, cultural, and economic, to ideological. However, rather than address them according to their nature, this section groups them into six categories in order to grasp their complexity. In that sense, the next chapter focuses on the factors historically and geographically embedded in the MRR as a tourist destination that constrain the tourism industry from materialising deep sustainable transformations.

### 9.2.1. Pro-growth ideology

The relative success of the destination during the tourism boom in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reinforced the regime rule that tourism is an important regional path of economic development. Indeed, the economic growth of the MRR has contributed to its consolidation as one of the top destinations in WA's South West (Tourism Western Australia, 2010). As a result, it is assumed that tourism growth will lead to economic regional growth which triggers public and private investment to secure this growth trajectory. Although this subsection does not aim to challenge the relation between tourism and economic growth, it does argue that in the MRR it has shaped a tourism-overdependent region, following a trajectory focused on tourism growth. This section also argues that vestiges of the frontier ideology (see Chapter 6) have also influenced the pro-growth tourism trajectory.

Interviewees confirmed that without tourism the region would be severely affected. For instance, Interviewee 11 highlighted that tourism in the MRR prevented

depopulation (see Sanders, 2006); Interviewee 23 mentioned that many jobs depend on tourism (see MRBTA, 2019); while Interviewees 25, 32, and 54 indicated that tourism-related business such as cellar doors, restaurants, tour operators, restaurants, and retailers are exposed to changes in the number of visitors (see Jerrard, 2008; Kirk, 2019f; Quinn, 2009b). As such, there is a general agreement that tourism has been one of the main economic solutions to a region that has witnessed several failed attempts to establish successful economic activities (see Chapter 6 and Flood Chavez et al., 2023). Hence, since tourism is a successful economic activity, its growth must be secured. An overfocus on the economic growth of tourism will clearly lead to trade-offs with other sustainability dimensions. For instance, the approval of the tourism projects in Smith's Beach and Gnarabup Beach reveals that tourism economic growth will prevail over the residents' claims to protect coastal areas from tourism development. As Interviewee 20, a resident and local activist, mentioned:

[I] am sure they [tourism businesses and authorities] appear to be in favour of substantial growth. Now (...) the biggest problem is going to be the infrastructure, the roads, the car parks, and everything to try to cater for this exceptional growth (in number of visitors). I'm sure the local authorities are well aware of that and whether they can keep pace with or not to is another matter, but personally, we (residents) have doubts (...)

[Interviewee 20, March 2021]

Tourism growth is also an underlying driver for the role of tourism authorities and DMOs. For instance, interviewees indicate that the tourism industry is more engaged in marketing the destination rather than conserving its components (Interviewees 22, 23, 24, and 40). This definitely does not mean that the tourism industry neglects its environmental and sociocultural impacts, but it suggests that the tourism industry has often prioritised the economic benefits of tourism. In that regard, an independent researcher (Interviewee 11) indicated that:

[M]any of these tourism organisations are really focused on marketing, especially the public ones, they are not allowed to interfere with development of any sort of thing, but they just need to communicate (marketing). So once you force these organisations to only do that, it becomes very hard for them to play a more substantial role in how a region develops (...)

[Interviewee 11, February 2021]

While attention to economic growth is a global pattern that has permeated weak sustainability approaches such as sustainable development (see for instance Hickel and Kallis, 2019), this section argues that the pre-existing frontier ideology has also played a relevant role in the pro-growth trajectory of the MRR as a tourist destination. Sanders (2006) defines the frontier ideology as the set of beliefs based on unlimited resources available for human development through the use of science and technology. He argues that this ideology prevailed in the MRR since Europeans settled and dominated their economic and industrial development especially until the 1970s (see also Jones et al., 2015a; Sanders, 1999). Yet, he also claims that this clearly growth-oriented ideology might permeate more recent economic activities in the region including tourism and wine-tourism. According to the interview analysis, it is possible to identify vestiges of the frontier ideology in the cognitive rules of the tourism regime. For instance, there is the perception that *land* is a largely available resource, and that tourism development can take place without disturbing the destination's rural and isolated sense of place. As a representative of the Australia's South West sustainable tourism observatory (ASWTO) (Interviewee 10), mentioned:

[I] think from tourism numbers (...) it [tourism] is definitive sustainable, I think we have still a lot of room for growth. I think the big issue is housing affordability and the impact it is having, obviously you need to open up more land, but then that is going to have an impact on taking away that kind of rural appeal (...)

[Interviewee 10, March 2021]

Precisely, the perception of the region as a space with *a lot of room for growth* reinforces the idea that the destination is not subject to overtourism during peak seasons or that tourism projects should focus on improving the region's accessibility, reducing the destination's seasonality, and providing more tourism infrastructure, which is often not aligned with the residents' opinion. As Interviewee 6, a representative of a local NGO, mentioned:

[T]here is always going to be a drive [for numbers]. I mean a hindering factor [for a sustainability transition] will be this notion that we must get thousands more tourists here every year, so there is always a drive to increase the numbers. I think we do not know whether that is just natural, or we want to see growth in the economy down here. So, that mentality is what I would call a hindering factor in moving towards a more sustainable [destination]. [In few words] measuring success simply by numbers (...)

[Interviewee 6, April 2021]

In a similar vein, a representative of Preserve Gnarabup (Interviewee 22) mentioned that:

[A]t the moment (...) with the culture of the government in Australia, in general, and also, in particular, our [local] council being a pro-development council (...) they want development (...) [Therefore] for sustainable tourism to succeed as a concept, the focus on the economic benefits is absolutely critical (...)

[Interviewee 22, March 2021]

As such, it is possible to infer that the search for growth is driven by the destination's main actors. As such, the pro-growth ideology, clearly facilitated by vestiges of the frontier ideology, serves as a lens through which problems, solutions, values, governance structures, and agendas are prioritised. This is a common feature of regimes as it reinforces their trajectory (Geels, 2005c; Geels and Schot, 2007; Turnheim et al., 2015). For instance, Interviewees 49, 51, and 53 reported that residents tend to demand the construction of more parking areas rather than a better public transport system. Similarly, Interviewees 2 and 48 said that authorities are not paying attention to problems related to the food supply for the local tourism industry (see, for instance, Ratliff, 2010; The Countryman, 2008). In fact, one of the interviewees held that most of the food going to the gourmet restaurants do not come from the region although it is marketed as local (see also Acott, 2014; Emery, 2014; Perpetch, 2012).

In a similar way, the pro-growth ideology also constraints the solutions to shape a more sustainable destination. One of the most notorious solutions proposed by tourism service providers and the local DMO is to focus on attracting high-end visitors under the premise that it would reduce the impact of tourism on the destination. In other words, high-end tourism is emerging as an adequate response to mass-tourism. As such, it is possible to notice a growing attention to high-end tourists especially in terms of tourism infrastructure funded by public and private bodies (see for instance Butler, 2004; Carter, 2007; Gregory, 2003; James, 2001; Kennedy, 2002; Macri, 2008a; Murray, 2020; Sprague, 2007b; Zimmerman and de Kruijff, 2019). Interviewee 47, representative of an important wine-tourism firm, argued in defence of high-end tourism:

[W]e [the MRR] are an expensive region and I think we got to the point where we are quite unapologetic about that [because] we are not catering for mass tourism, we recognise that we are catering for niche high-value traveller tourism, I think that would help us as well (...) [The MRR as a tourist destination] is not being marketed to mass tourism, it is really defining itself now towards the high-value traveller, less number higher spend [while] being unapologetic about that (...)

[Interviewee 47, February 2021]

Similarly, a former representative of the local DMO (Interviewee 9) mentioned that:

[W]e [MRBTA] tend to focus on high value travellers, it is not so much about volume, but rather the spend on what those people bring into the region. It puts the focus on sustainable tourism, sustainable being environmentally focused in a low footprint. That's not about majority of numbers coming in. But attracting the right customer with the right spend and the international market is very important for that, as is the interstate.

[Interviewee 9, February 2021]

The logic behind the proposal of high-end tourism in the region clearly aims to reduce the environmental impact of tourism while favouring the local economy, yet it would likely entail major investment in luxury accommodations, restaurants, tours and similar products and services. That tendency would increase the cost of living in the destination and might reinforce the ongoing housing challenge described in the previous chapter. In that regard, Interviewees 1 and 22 claimed that transforming the MRR into a luxury destination would shape a destination only for a high-end type of tourist. Therefore, the MRR would become a destination to be mainly visited by a particular type of visitor in detriment to low-income visitors. Besides, high-end tourism in other destinations has not had the intended positive results. For instance, Lopes et al. (2022) report that in destinations that are highly dependent on foreign multinational companies high-end tourism brings economic and social inequalities (see also Brenner and Aguilar, 2002). In turn, high-end tourism could also deter backpackers who in the MRR are pivotal for hospitality and agriculture, as it has happened in other destinations (see Scheyvens, 2002). Therefore, it is possible to notice that the pro-growth ideology tunnels the vision of the tourism regime actors so that they look for solutions that might be not entirely sustainable and would fall in the category of incremental innovation.



The economic growth ideology clearly constrains the trajectory of the destination in a way that Geels and Schott (2007) categorise as a reproduction pathway. It means that this path-dependent factor favours incremental measures and solutions to the tourism industry challenges. For instance, it is possible to notice measures to reduce seasonality and improve accessibility that aim to increase the visitation to the region. While this trajectory does not mean that the destination aims to grow without paying attention to the environmental and sociocultural aspect of tourism, it denotes that the solutions and prioritisation of problems will have tourism growth as the main pillar. As such, this factor constrains the destination from becoming a sustainable destination.

### 9.2.2. Governance for sustainability

As discussed in the literature review chapters, governance is pivotal to steer the trajectory of the destination to more sustainable forms. Sustainability and governance for sustainability are already complex in nature which makes it challenging for them to be effectively put in practice (Lange et al., 2013; Meadowcroft, 2007). However, the MRR as a tourist destination has made remarkable steps to incorporate sustainability as noted in the previous chapter (subsection 7.3.2.). Some of those initiatives could have the potential to change the trajectory of the destination. Yet, the research has identified particular governance aspects that hurdle any sustainability shift in the destination: bureaucracy and coordination between government levels.

A reiterative complaint from tourism service providers has been bureaucracy. According to them, the local authorities have not improved their administrative procedures despite the growth of the tourism industry. Although, bureaucracy and sustainability would not appear as related at first sight, the interview analysis revealed that, for instance, several tourism service providers did not apply to become eco-businesses because of the tedious application process. In turn, other tourism service providers indicated that the bureaucratic processes of local authorities discourage them from carrying out improvements of their facilities or applying for funding (Interviewees 1 and 50). Considering that bureaucracy can impact the sustainability of a destination (Marino and Pariso, 2018; Sahide et al., 2019; Yusriadi et al., 2019), this governance aspect of the destination helps maintain the regime's status-quo.

In terms of coordination among the different levels of government (federal, state, and the two local governments), there are two types of relationships that do not help the MRR become a sustainable destination. Figure 69 depicts those types. The vertical one refers to the relationship between the federal, state, and local levels of government whereas the horizontal one refers to the relationship between local government areas at the destination.

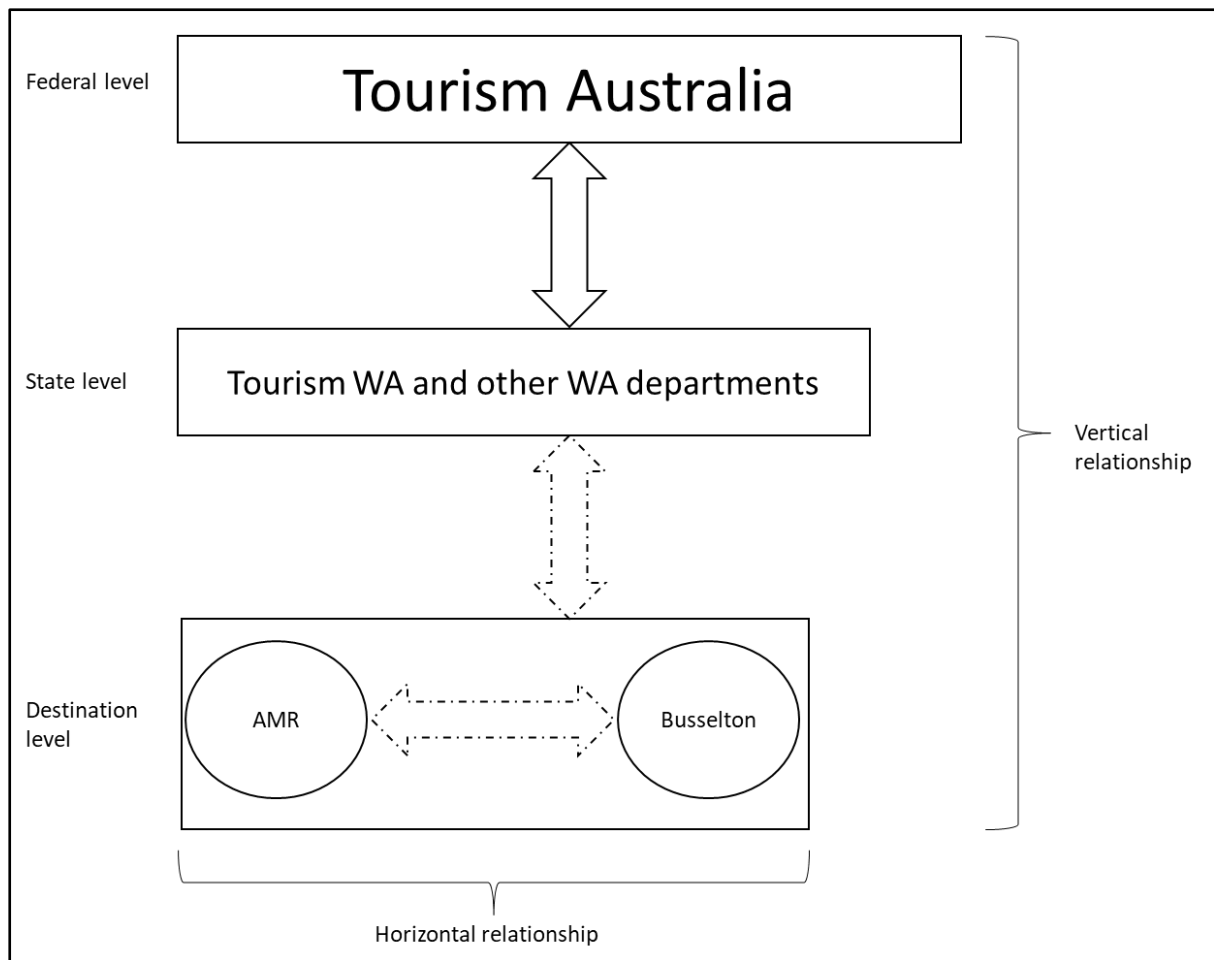


Figure 639: Vertical and horizontal relationships between different scales of government

The first detrimental alignment refers to the vertical relationship between the Australian federal government, WA government, and the two LGAs, in terms of sustainability. Indeed, according to Interviewees 27 and 28, both at the Federal level, there is a misalignment between tourism federal, state, and local authorities. They indicated that in many tourist destinations the three levels of government are carrying out different functions which are not necessarily leading in the same direction. Besides, a direct relation between the federal government and local

governments is not recognised by the Australian Constitution (Interviewee 28). Hence, state governments are the bridge between these levels; however, as noted by Interviewee 37 (a representative of an LGA), there are cases in which the views of the WA government and the local governments in the MRR are contested. For instance, Interviewee 23, a member of a local environmental organisation, argued that:

You can make some of your own local laws, but the state government [WA government] basically set the agenda as far as development goes. What they [WA government] want to see in the Shire, they would override the Shire (...) Recently, they have done that in some suburbs in Perth where (...) the [WA] government just overrode them [the local government] and increased the intensity of development (...) and they will do that here as well. And the [local] planning have to go to them [because] it is out of their control (...)

[Interviewee 23, April 2021]

As a result, several interviewees complained that the overruling of the local governments' decision by the WA reflects their lack of knowledge about the tourism industry at the destination and a *Perth-centric* (Interview 17) vision of tourism. Plus, political differences between the WA and the local governments could also influence their coordination and a strong leadership towards sustainability, as argued by Interviewee 31. This represents a hurdle to a sustainability transition in the destination especially considering that *sustainability* could have different meaning for different sectors of society and tourism stakeholders. As Interviewee 26, a representative of Tourism Australia, argued:

[T]he biggest challenge from a national perspective is that sustainability as a concept means something different to every single person you talk to. And tourism is not just one industry, it has many industries that operate to make a visitor economy. So, getting people to discover or articulate what sustainability means to them, and how they can have positive impact on their business (...) I think that is the very first hurdle and that is a global hurdle, not just an Australian hurdle. [The fact] that sustainability means something different to pretty much everyone you speak to, from recycling single-use plastics, to saving the planet and everything in between (...)

[Interviewee 26, May 2021]

The other type of relationship is the horizontal relationship between the two local government areas (AMR and Busselton). While it is evident that both LGAs benefit from tourism and, to some extent, they collaborate for common benefits under the same branding The Margaret River Region (see, for instance, Thompson, 2015, p.

139), there are incompatibilities that prevent any sustainability transition at the destination. For instance, according to the interview analysis Busselton is more focused on growth while AMR prioritises environmental conservation, although both depend on the same destination image (Kirk, 2018, 2017; Morgan, 2012). As a result, Interviewee 4, a former member of the AMR council, declared that it is difficult and complex to establish sustainable tourism policies at the destination level. Likewise, those differences can also influence the involvement with top-down eco-accreditation processes as mentioned by Interviewee 51 (a tourism facility manager in Busselton):

[I] think probably Margaret River, versus Busselton, can be a bit more advanced in terms of its environmental accreditation and because they seem to be more focused down there on it (...) the community is more environmentally conscious in that region [AMR]. Maybe that is because Busselton is three times bigger as we have a lot of Perth people here that have just moved down. So maybe they have not lived here as long [and] they are not as conscious [as people in AMR] about seeing the change [of the destination] (...)

[Interviewee 51, March 2021]

While the tourism sector in both LGAs has achieved important economic progress since the tourism boom (see section 8.2), the flaws in the horizontal relationship indicate that AMR, compared to Busselton, is the LGA taking stronger steps towards sustainable tourism. In this scenario, as the destination supports further sustainable tourism measures in AMR (for instance the eco-destination accreditation), it is possible that Busselton falls behind in sustainable tourism terms. In that sense, the MRR as a tourist destination could potentially encompass one LGA (AMR) transitioning towards sustainable tourism and another (Busselton) stagnating. Therefore, the flaws in the horizontal integration represent a path-dependent factor as they could constrain the sustainability transition of the entire destination. This situation is similar, to some extent, to the regional development trap (Diemer et al., 2022). Diemer et al. (2022) define the regional development trap as a situation where actions to reduce inequalities among regions may actually lead to the stagnation of the least developed ones. In the case of the MRR, the actions to promote sustainability transitions could potentially lead to the sustainability transition and the stagnation of both LGAs respectively. While it requires further research, this thesis uses the term *sustainable destination trap* to refer to this case.

In the same context, marketing campaigns about the MRR do not consider the differences between both LGAs. For instance, the marketing campaigns do not remark the differences between Busselton and AMR which could be unexpected for some visitors (Interviewees 3 and 17). As Interviewee 17 explained, the AMR has a more rural landscape compared to the higher urbanised landscape of Busselton. As noted, the governance issues caused by flawed vertical and horizontal coordination have a direct impact on the effectiveness of any top-down or bottom-up initiative to promote a more sustainable destination. As such, as long as these governance aspects are not addressed, the tourism regime will maintain its trajectory.

### 9.2.3. Engagement with a transient labour force

The transient labour force are mainly foreign backpackers living in the country under a *working holiday visa*. That type of visa requires them to work three months in regional areas of Australia such as the MRR. Most of the transient labour force come to the destination to work on hospitality and viticulture activities that follow a seasonal pattern. Indeed, since the MRR is a seasonal destination that does not require a constant staff in specific areas, these workers have become essential for the normal operation of the tourism industry (and other related industries such as wine) in the MRR. For instance, an independent academic and former resident (Interviewee 2) mentioned:

[T]he backpackers come to the MRR for a reason that they are drawn to the MRR as it is internationally known. So [backpackers] builds tourism and creates tourism. [Backpackers] are part of the tourism (...)

[Interviewee 2, March 2021]

Similarly, a representative of TWA (Interviewee 31) mentioned that:

[T]he tourism industry of MRR generally is fairly static as far as it is labour force of Australians. The interesting portion of the labour force that comes in seasonally tends to be a labour force of non-Australians, often tourists, such as young Europeans, who are wanting a holiday in the MRR (...)

[Interviewee 31, February 2021]

As noted, the transient labour force is vital for the continuous operation of the tourism sector in the MRR. While this co-dependency is a usual phenomenon in several tourist destinations in Australia (Interviewees 9 and 31), it is possible to notice that the nature of engagement does not allow a fluid knowledge transfer between tourism firms and transient labour force. As indicated by Niewiadomski (2016), knowledge transfer in the tourism sector is necessary for the emergence of innovation. Therefore, it is possible to argue that institutionalised relationships that do not foster knowledge transfer might result in maintaining the existing tourism path. The data analysis identified that the inefficient conditions for knowledge transfer between tourism firms and transient labour hinder the formation of local knowledge and diffusion of new knowledge in the destination between firms and transient labour. This is important as transient labour carries knowledge from one destination to another. In turn, the overreliance on transient labour always runs the risk of locking-out local labour which is factor hindering the formation and diffusion of local knowledge.

While tourism service providers agree that their demand for staff tends to vary along the year following the seasonality of the destination and the nature of their business, they also agree that training transient workers every year is a misuse of resources and does not contribute to creating local knowledge. For instance, Interviewee 53 indicated that backpackers are not usually helpful with guiding or providing specific tourist information and recommendations to visitors if they are not trained which demands time and resources. Nevertheless, trained workers leave the destination when peak seasons are over before they are able to transfer that knowledge to other local workers or firms. As Interviewee 45 argued:

[I] have noticed that vineyards have a lot of seasonal workers and I avoid them [because] if someone [worker] is not going to be with me, for instance ten years, I am not going to bother [to hire him or her], because I really want to put the training in and get everyone to learn what we are [as a company] (...). It [training the labour force] is quite expensive, [hence, workers leaving the company after a short time is] like losing intellectual property in a way (...)

[Interviewee 45, April 2021]

In that sense, the reliance on this transient labour force hinders the formation of local knowledge in the destination as it does not remain in the region. In turn, the fact that transient workers tend to accept labour conditions that are not attractive to local people, hinders any attempt of tourism service providers to switch the source of labour force. In that sense, the low participation of local workers in the destination also represents a barrier to the generation of local knowledge in the tourism industry, as noted by Interviewee 9:

[T]he core problem lies with the fact that tourism and hospitality is not really seen as a great career, so I think government have a responsibility to educate younger people that there is a career path with tourism (...) whereas in Europe you find people are very proud of their job and careers in tourism, so we have an underlying problem (...)

[Interviewee 9, February 2021]

As such, it is possible to notice that particular features of the destination affect the consolidation of local knowledge. By the same token, while knowledge is transmitted from local tourism businesses to transient workers, it does not occur in the opposite direction. This is due to tourism businesses' limited engagement with and interest in the transient workers' knowledge, which, in many cases, is rich in sustainability principles (Interviewees 25, 50, and 53). For instance, several tourism firms do not offer accommodation to transient labour resulting in them locating, in some cases, far from the firms and creating their own networks of support among them, far from the firms in relational terms. Considering that proximity plays an important role in the transfer of knowledge (Boschma et al., 2017; Boschma and Frenken, 2011, 2010; Niewiadomski, 2016), it is possible to argue that the rules governing the regime prevent a direct and potentially fruitful engagement between transient labour and tourism firms in the sense of knowledge diffusion.

Hence, the nature of engagement between the tourism industry and transient labour blocks the diffusion of new knowledge in the destination. This represents a problem for a sustainability transition in the destination because, according to interviewees, most of international backpackers do have knowledge about sustainable practices. Such a knowledge could indeed contribute to the incorporation of sustainability into tourism and to the creation of niches for the emergence of innovation towards sustainability transitions in tourism. This is important considering that knowledge

transfer, as well as the implementation of external practices (Martin and Sunley, 2006), represent a potential de-locking mechanism in tourist destinations (Niewiadomski, 2016).

#### 9.2.4. Deterministic understanding of destination evolution

Most respondents expressed a concern and resignation about the evolution of the MRR as a tourist destination. Most interviewees suggested that the MRR is on its way to become a destination similar to Byron Bay (New South Wales, Australia) or the Gold Coast (Queensland, Australia). This section considers this understanding of the destination to be deterministic. According to the interviewees, both destinations are overdeveloped, overcrowded, and not adequate for residents, but made for visitors, and they notice that the increasing tourist infrastructure in the MRR is a symptom that the destination is following the same trajectory. For instance, a long-time resident (Interviewee 16) indicated that:

[B]yron Bay in the East Coast is a massive version of the MRR. It is so popular that they have all sort of problems there, the only thing that save us is the isolation, we are a long way from anywhere, but what is going to happen is that there is going to be a local airline (Jetstar) flying into Busselton which is a town 45 min north of AMR and that could really increase the numbers coming here from the East Coast.

[Interviewee 16, March 2021]

This fear of the region becoming an overdeveloped and overcrowded destination creates a negative perception of all kinds of tourism development, even those developments that could entail a sustainability direction, such as the plan to build eco-accommodations on the Cape-to-Cape track according to Interviewee 31 (representative of Tourism WA). This deterministic understanding has prompted residents and environmental organisations to perceive tourism development as a potential threat and organise to prevent, from their perspective, the very likely but undesired destiny of the destination. Indeed, a member of a local environmental organisation indicated that one of their tasks is to prevent such evolution from taking place. For instance, Interviewee 19 mentioned:

[W]hat is driving the community to long-term care and restoration of this environment, it is actually keeping a community functional and intact [and] to strengthen the environment rather than degrade that environment (...) I mean [if] you look at other regions around the world or in Australia like Byron Bay, they are overrun by [tourism development]. They [the local community



in Byron Bay] have not called it quick enough and now they have to try to get it [Byron Bay] into a functional sustainable way (...) That is what the people that I am working with are driven by, we are not driven by anything other than to not see tourism overwhelm this region and [redacted] it up (...)

[Interviewee 19, March 2021]

In turn, the deterministic understanding of the destination evolution has also influenced tourism service providers to normalise the impacts of tourism on the local community. For instance, Interviewee 45 argued that overcrowded destinations are a normal feature of every destination and that residents should be aware of that. Likewise, Interviewee 44 indicated that conflicts between residents and tourists over access to local facilities, such as parking, shopping centres, restaurants, are normal in the evolution of any destination. As Interviewee 10, a member of the ASWT observatory, explains:

[I] personally feel that growing population is part of the natural development of the tourism region (...) but I think it is the natural development [of any tourist destination], once a place has its charms, then it gets an appeal on them, it gets that credible message of tourism, everyone rushes into that tourism location and want that slice of the pie and then it is going to follow its rational development to a tipping point when it kind of losses that charm and evolves into something else (...)

[Interviewee 10, March 2021]

Therefore, this deterministic understanding of the evolution of the destination which assumes that the MRR will eventually become an overdeveloped and overcrowded destination is a hurdle to path-shaping processes. This is important as destinations are clearly susceptible to path-creation (Ma and Hassink, 2013). Likewise, this is concerning as there are projects that could represent a sustainable shift in the destination. In turn, this perception has a different effect on tourism service providers as it leads to the normalisation of tourism negative impacts. This situation prevents tourism service providers in the MRR from thinking about potential solutions which could contribute to achieving a more sustainable destination. As such, this deterministic perception of destination evolution hinders the emergence and success of initiatives towards a more sustainable destination.

#### 9.2.5. Natural and heritage resource-base

Chapter 4 reports that, rather than being a stage on a trajectory, lock-in is a process where positive outcomes tend to manifest at the beginning until they are later offset by increasing negative outcomes (Martin, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2006). In the same vein, Ma and Hassink (2014, 2013) report that old tourist destinations where natural unique attractions are historical and geographically embedded in the destination experience positive lock-in outcomes as they maintain the attractiveness of the destination. The MRR as a tourist destination appears to experience that situation, not only because it is indeed an old destination (tourism industry emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century), but also because it is highly dependent on natural (and cultural and heritage) resources. As such, this last path-dependent factor does not necessarily imply a constraint towards a sustainable destination, although it does represent the maintenance of a particular feature of the destination.

The MRR is a tourist destination that since its emergence more than a hundred years ago has been underpinned by its natural resources. The caves together with native forests and the coastal landscapes have been part of the destination image despite the different global and national events that have taken place during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although they have been relegated by wine-tourism and surf during the 1980s and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a renewed attention to nature-based tourism has helped them achieve the same importance as other tourism drivers at the destination. In turn, the historical development of the region has also shaped a

region with significant cultural and heritage resources that are also an important component of the destination. Likewise, recent local strategies influenced by external factors such as eco-destination and sustainable tourism, have encouraged the inclusion of Aboriginal people in the tourism industry as a pivotal element in the destination (Block, 2015; MRBTA, 2017).

As such, tourism projects, strategies, policies, and investments tend to favour these tourism resources as they have been doing since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, this path-dependent factor plays a positive role at the destination as it forces the regime to consider the conservation of natural, and cultural and heritage resources. In turn, this path-dependent factor has contributed to the incorporation of nature-based tourism strategies and eco-tourism businesses into the destination which offer a potential platform for a sustainability transition in the destination (see section 8.3). In that sense, it is possible to add to Ma and Hassink's (2014, 2013) argument that positive lock-in outcomes could in the long-term contribute to path-creation in old destinations that are based on natural (and cultural and heritage) resources. Considering this factor and the previous ones, it is possible to relate them to Martin and Sunley's (2006) sources of regional path-dependence (see Table 22). Importantly, rather than defining the factors as regional, this thesis refers to them as *destination* path-dependence.

Table 22: Sources of destination path-dependence in the MRR, based on Martin and Sunley (2006, p. 412)

Sources of destination path-dependence	Destination path-dependence factors identified in the MRR
Natural resource based	Natural and heritage resources have been a pivotal element in the evolution and consolidation of the MRR as an international tourist destination. Although they have been relegated by wine, surf, and adventure experiences, they have been gradually incorporated into the new tourism experiences. While literature suggest that they are long-lasting, the current environmental pressures (climate change) could represent a threat on them.
Sunk costs of local assets and infrastructures	Since several firms have made big investments on tourism infrastructure and even residents have become dependent on tourism, the pro-growth ideology in the destination has installed sunk costs in the destination. In that sense, a radical change of tourism would face that most of these investments (mainly infrastructure) are quasi-irreversible.
Region-specific institutions, social forms, and cultural traditions	While a pro-growth ideology can be found in multiple destinations, it is possible to relate it with the frontier ideology that has been part of the evolution of the tourism sector (and other sectors and industries) in the MRR. The low participation of local labour in the tourism sector, which is related to the engagement with transient labour, can be a result of local culture. As the tourism sector evolved since the 1970s onwards, there has been a reliance on external labour as local labour tended to focus on more profitable industries in other regions.
Regional (technological) lock-in	Despite not being a technological artefact or development, the TALC appeared as an innovative approach to tourism in the 1980s and 1990s when the MRR was becoming a diverse international destination. As such, it is possible to infer that the TALC was assumed as the adequate approach to manage the destination to secure its positive economic performance as much as possible. This approach has, in turn, permeated into other organisations in the tourism sector and residents too.
Interregional linkages and interdependencies	The tendency of European youngsters and, more recently, of Latin American people to opt for work and travel experiences in Australia has reinforced the overreliance of the tourism sector in the MRR on transient labour. The pro-growth ideology has also been influenced by the opportunities that the recent economic progress of Asian economies. In that sense, many projects in the region have been prioritised to satisfy the increasing influx of tourists from those countries.

In summary, the path-dependent forces in the destination constrain its trajectory by means of reinforcing the existing regime rules. Since the emergence of the new regime in the destination can be related to the tourism boom in the MRR at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is possible to argue that there has been a case of a sequence of positive destination lock-ins, as argued by Brekke (2015) for regions in general (see also Hassink, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2006). However, positive lock-in can lead to institutional rigidification and higher levels of internal competition which could become hurdles to innovation as noted by Martin and Sunley (2006). In that case, a positive lock-in can represent increasing economic revenues in the short-term and negative outcomes in the long-term (Martin and Sunley, 2006) that could be detrimental in environmental and social terms. For instance, despite the subsequent positive lock-ins in the MRR with positive economic result, there are plenty of sustainability challenges at the destination that have not been tackled (see Chapter 7). As such, this section argues that positive lock-in does not necessarily entail a sustainability-related trajectory. As in the case of the MRR where it is necessary for the tourism sector in the MRR to opt for positive lock-in strategies that aim towards sustainable tourism. Positive lock-in with a clear focus on sustainable tourism can contribute to steering the destination's trajectory in line with a sustainability transition. Figure 70 presents an evolutionary take on the MRR where it is possible to notice the many elements that have contributed to the subsequent phases of positive lock-in and the future lock-in options.

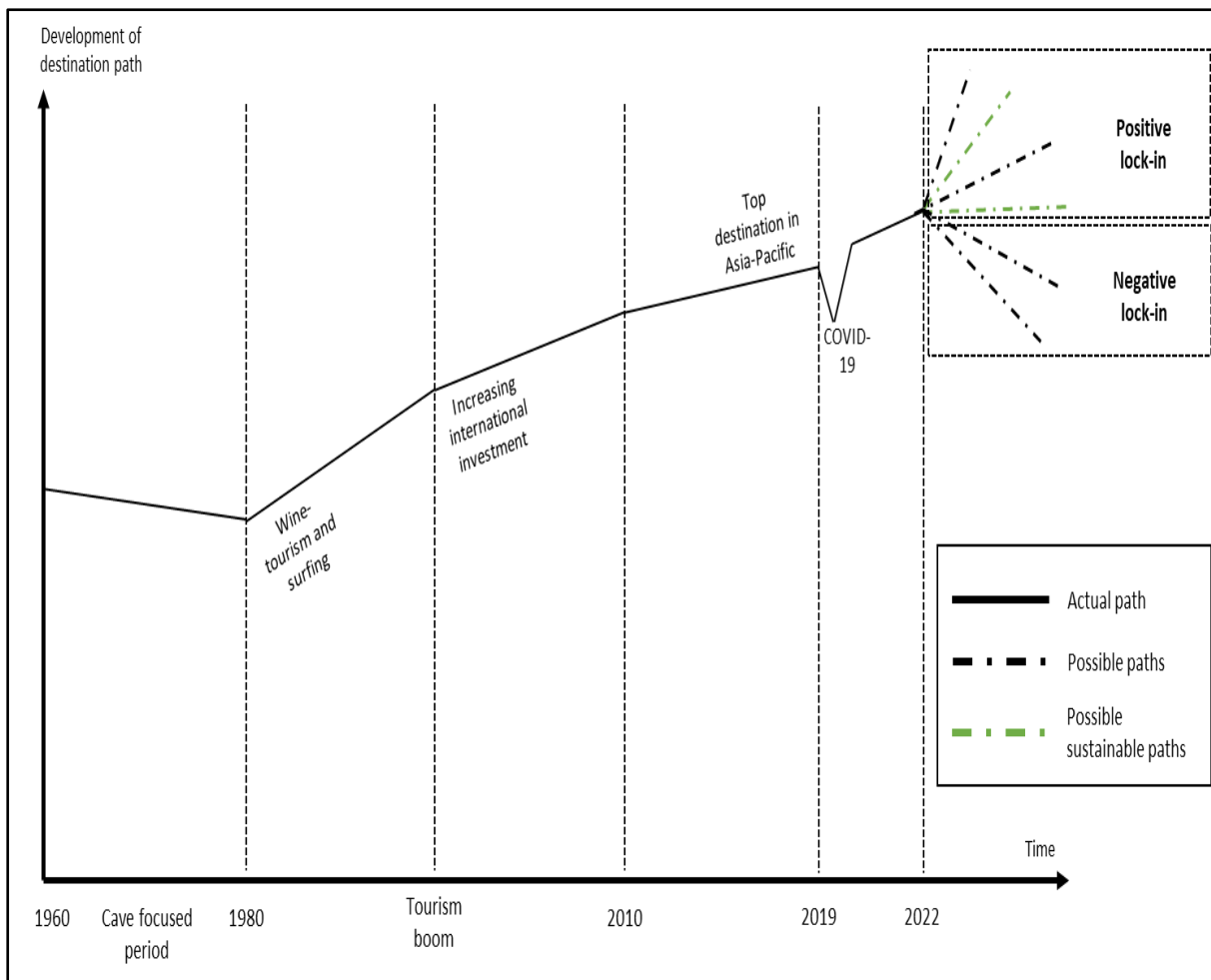


Figure 70: Positive lock-in sequence and potential sustainability transitions, based on Martin and Sunley (2006, p. 418, figure 2)  
 (The development of the destination can mainly be in economic terms)

The next section focuses on forces which, rather than constraining the trajectory of the tourism sector in the MRR, look forward to stimulating a shift in that trajectory. Considering that this thesis focuses on sustainability transitions, the data analysis has focused on those path-shaping factors that promote sustainability shifts in the destination.

### 9.3. Path-shaping factors

Given that sustainability transitions represent a shift from the dominant regime towards more sustainable modes of production and consumption (Coenen et al., 2012; Geels, 2010) and that sustainable tourism entails the incorporation of sustainability into the tourism industry (see Lowry, 2017; UNEP and UNWTO, 2005; UNWTO and UNDP, 2017; Weaver, 2015), it is necessary to identify the underpinning elements behind the sustainability initiatives taking place in the destination (see Chapter 7). According to the literature review, it is possible to infer that sustainability initiatives that aim to shift the MRR's trajectory are in niches. In the case of the MRR those niches can be found in community organisations, spaces for innovation led by local and WA authorities or businesses, and interrelations between visitors and tourism firms. The actors in these niches are aware of the regime rules and, therefore, promote changes aimed at disrupting the regime (mindful deviation) (Garud et al., 2010; Garud and Karnøe, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2006). Mindful deviation is an important element for path-creation; nonetheless, the data analysis has identified particular forces (causal mechanisms) underpinning the mindful deviation in the MRR. They are presented below.

#### 9.3.1. Local sustainability ethos

To understand this factor, it is necessary to pay attention to the period between the 1960s and 1980s when an influx of new residents came to the MRR. These people had a closer relationship with the natural landscape whether it was the coastal areas, the caves, the remaining native forests, or all of them. This perspective represented a clash with the frontier ideology that was dominant in the area since the settler-colonising process began back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the frontier ideology is not entirely absent in the region, the emergence of several sustainability initiatives coming not only from grassroots organisations and residents' associations but also from tourism firms owned by residents represent a collective ideology rooted in sustainability. Their aim to become more relevant in the region's decision-making and policymaking process also reflect an important step towards a more sustainable region. In the case of tourism, their actions have a direct influence on the relationship between tourism authorities and tourism firms, tourism firms and residents, and residents and tourism authorities. Evidently, this large level of participation reflects

distributed and strategic agency (see Bækkelund, 2021; Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2020, 2018).

Sanders (2006, p. 291) argues that “the key to tourism being sustainable is to manage the accelerated pace of development and maintain element of the many diverse past land uses as they all contribute to the unique tourism experiences that this region has to offer present and future visitors.” Precisely, the local sustainability ethos manifests itself in activities from residents, often in organisations, to prevent tourism development or policies that can put in danger the natural, cultural and heritage components of the destination. For instance, initiatives such as Defending Smith’s Beach in 2007 that led to demonstrations against tourism development at that beach as it was considered a sensitive coastal area (Interviewees 15, 20, and 44). While most of these movements do not stop tourism development projects, they do reinforce the local sustainability ethos by means of increasing awareness and creating spaces for interaction of ideas and creation of networks. These outcomes have been described for worldwide grassroot movements (Smith et al., 2016). In recent years it is possible to notice major participation of relevant well-funded external organisations, such as Surfriders Australia and WA Forest Alliance, and institutionalisation of community organisations such as Transition Town MR and MR Community Alliance. Those examples are indicators of niches that are not in an embryonic state anymore (see Geels and Schot, 2007). Figure 71, for instance, presents a local organisation that has helped raise awareness of the protection of native forests in the Southwest region including the MRR.





Figure 71: Nannas for the Native Forests protesting near Margaret River  
Kirk (2021b Photo taken by Ray Swarts)

This path-shaping factor can be understood in terms of *topophilia* (see Tuan, 1990). As mentioned in Chapter 4, the emotional attachment to a particular landscape also referred to as *topophilia*, can result in activities towards preventing changes in the landscape (Bridge et al., 2013). For instance, Interviewee 31, a representative of Tourism WA, stated that:

[The MRR] has got the *what makes it very attractive, also makes it vulnerable* [because the] residents don't want the area to grow anymore and develop too much more because it starts to kill the golden goose that is Margaret River.

[Interviewee 31, February 2021]

Finally, an important consideration to make in this path-shaping factor is the creation of spaces for the participation of Aboriginal people in the tourism sector. Indeed, interviewees have mentioned that active Aboriginal leaders work together with local tourism firms to disseminate Aboriginal knowledge (Interviewees 6 and 50). There are also few Indigenous tourism firms that place Aboriginal culture at the centre of the tourism experience (see Wilson-Clark, 2003). However, the data analysis has not found any organic movement led by Aboriginal people towards making tourism more

sustainable. This does not mean that Aboriginal people are disengaged with sustainability (see Kinnane, 2005; Sanders, 2006), but clearly denotes an issue that grassroot and other bottom-up organisations must address. In fact, it is possible to infer from Interviewee 11 that despite Indigenous cultural heritage being used as a pull factor, there are not enough opportunities for them to participate in the tourism sector.

### 9.3.2. Destination branding

Chapter 3 discusses destination branding and its relationship with the destination image (see Blain et al., 2005; Ruiz-Real et al., 2020; Tasci and Kozak, 2006). In the case of the MRR, the branding of the destination implies a sustainable, clean, green, inclusive, and attractive MRR. The branding also positions the MRR as a distinct destination with a large range of experiences based on wine, surf, and nature (Block, 2015; MRBTA, 2017). The destination branding has resulted from a large series of dialogues and agreements among the multiple actors involved in the tourism sector under the leadership of the MRBTA with the support of local and state authorities. Importantly, the destination branding promotes a general awareness about the importance of the destination's resources. As Interviewee 17, a member of local community organisation, explains:

[I] would really wish in the context of sustainability that the MRR would have something (...) that actually underlines, emphasises, and enhances our environmental wilderness reputation because that is essentially what the [destination] brand relies on (...) that the water is clean, the air is clean, the coastline is wild and rugged (...) but all those things are under threat when not managed wisely in the context of tourism and that is the problem (...)

[Interviewee 17, March 2021]

In that sense, this section argues that the destination branding represents a strong path-shaping factor because of four main reasons. First, it attracts suitable tourism firms that are also concerned with conservation of local resources and the wellbeing of residents. Although, this might only be a discourse for some firms, most of the interviewees indicated that all tourism firms coming to the MRR are aware not only of the destination's policies and strategies but also of the residents' ethos. For instance, Interviewee 2, an academic researcher and former resident, mentioned that:

[Big businesses can have quite an influence [in making tourism more sustainable in the MRR]. If they feel that the brand of the MRR is all about environment, there may be some internal encouragement by the firms that want to invest here (...)

[Interviewee 2, March 2021]

Second, the destination brand hinders the emergence of incompatible industries. This has been noticeable during the demonstrations against oil exploration (The West Australian, 2010b) and mining projects at or nearby the region (Emerson, 2010; Loney and Parker, 2010; Paddenburg, 2010b; The West Australian, 2010c). In these cases, tourism firms, residents (including popular ones), and local politicians united under the argument of maintaining the destination's image and brand. The outcomes of these demonstrations and organised advocacy have even resulted in a blanket ban on coal mining in the region (Loney and Kerr, 2012).

Third, the destination branding influences the decisions of visitors with a high awareness of sustainability and sustainable tourism to visit the MRR. These visitors are expected to have a better behaviour at the destination, engage more with tourism firms that offer eco-friendly services and facilities, and interact with the available sustainable tourism initiatives and experiences. In this way, the destination branding influences the visitors' behaviour in the MRR as suggested by Blain et al. (2005). For instance, Interviewee 6 indicated that destination branding represents new type of visitors coming to the region which could represent an opportunity to promote a more sustainable tourism in the destination. In the same vein, Interviewee 9 mentioned that:

[The destination brand] is the unique point of difference to other regions. If we have more products that are sustainable and environmentally focused, then we are finding those customers that are looking for that destination that delivers that experience. Then [the MRR] will certainly be ahead of some other regions. So, I feel it (the destination brand) adds value, and it is an opportunity to highlight more effectively the natural and cultural assets that we have. So [the brand] will improve sustainability, longevity, and I think it gives resilience to the region.

[Interviewee 9, February 2021]

The fact that visitors with an interest in sustainability arrive in the region also opens an opportunity for niches to prove their innovations with them. The latter refers to the fact that the interactions between visitors and novel sustainable experiences in the

MRR could contribute to the increasing structuration of niches as argued by Geels (see also Geels, 2005c, 2004a). As such, niches can become more stable and be more prepared to disrupt the dominant regime. Importantly, visitors can also influence the destination as noticed in the following subsection.

### 9.3.3. Visitors' environmental awareness

Considering that there is a growing environmental awareness worldwide, which also applies to visitors (see for instance Hall, 2016), the data analysis has identified the will of tourism firms in the MRR to target visitors' environmental awareness as a path-shaping force towards more sustainable tourism. Visitor's environmental awareness as a global process can be understood as a landscape force that is perceived by regime and niche actors. The manner in which this global process is perceived, that might vary between destinations and analytical levels, can influence a potential sustainability transition (Geels and Schot, 2007). In the case of the MRR, this landscape's gradual change is mostly noticed by regime actors who identify a potential market niche. Hence to target this market niche, tourism firms have invested not only in marketing but also in infrastructure that fall into the category of eco-friendly (see for instance ABC Regional News, 2019; Adelaide Advertiser, 2001; Bell, 2001; Sprague, 2007b; Sunday Times (Perth), 2014; The West Australian, 2010a).

While it is undeniable that the main motivation to target this market is related to increased revenues, it is possible to argue that the local sustainability ethos can also be related. This is because many owners of tourism firms in the region are residents who moved to the MRR in the 1960s-1980s and have a strong interest in the sustainable management of the region's natural, cultural and heritage tourism resources. As Interviewee 31 explained:

[I] think most companies that reside in the MRR will only make money if they are sustainable, as a result, most of the most influential [companies] in the region have a sustainable ambition. It is not only in environmental terms, but they definitely have a social sustainable ambition as well.

[Interviewee 31, March 2021]

Other actors in the regime, such as public authorities, have also perceived this change as noticed from interviewees representing them at the three levels of government. Their strategy to target this growing niche is to market the region, which is related to the previous section, and to development plans that incorporate more sustainable approaches such as infrastructure for active travel. For example, a representative of WA Department of Transport (Interviewee 33) mentioned that:

[Visitors] kind of desire for something a bit different. I mean, stuff like e-bikes, and that kind of thing (...) There is a huge growth in people wanting to spend time out in nature and cycling is a great way to do that. So, I think that [cycling tourism] is another driving factor (...) People are more interested in travelling sustainably, and those kinds of things (...)

[Interviewee 33, March 2021]

However, despite the influence that this growing market niche is having on the destination, interviewees, especially those managing small tourism businesses (Interviewees 43 and 54), indicate that the influence of *green tourists* is still incipient. Interview 54, a small wine tourism entrepreneur indicated:

[T]hey call them *green visitor* or more environmentally conscious visitor. Maybe agree with that [their influence], in part, but I still would say that it is a very small niche. I do not think it is a big influence (...) I would not see that [a sustainable tourism business] as a key decision driver for many visitors to the area. I am sure it would be for some. I think a lot of people come to the MRR for a good winery experience, good wine tasting and a good lunch.

[Interviewee 54, May 2021]

All in all, this global landscape process is triggering a gradual change with those regime actors that perceive it to be a potential profitable market. While there is clearly an economic motivation, it is important to remark that sustainable tourism considers the economic growth of tourism within environment and social parameters.

#### 9.3.4. Destination-wide accreditation mechanisms

As indicated in the previous chapter, there are initiatives taking place in the MRR that aim to certify or credit the entire destination, namely eco-destination accreditation, led by Ecotourism Australia, and Geopark, a UNESCO category for landscapes of geological importance. The former has been awarded for the AMR in 2022 with the support of the local government and the MRBTA (Shire of AMR, 2022) whereas the latter is still under planning, with the MRBTA being the main actor

concerned with obtaining it (Interviewees 9 and 47). Hence, this subsection explains the path-shaping potential of the eco-destination accreditation based on three important characteristics.

First, this mechanism could promote a sustainable shift for the entire destination. Although, by the end of 2022, only the AMR had achieved the certification, a representative of the certification organisation has manifested that Busselton has demonstrated interest in eco-destination certification. Nonetheless, for the latter to obtain the certification requires further engagement of the local council (Interviewees 17, 47, and 51). This issue directly relates to the governance problems at the destination level, addressed in Subsection 8.2.2. Yet, its partial accomplishment already represents a commitment of one of the local council and tourism sector to incorporate sustainability practices into tourism. According to all representatives of the interviewed tourism firms, this accreditation has been a recognition to their already existing efforts to take green initiatives. The eco-destination accreditation in the AMR encompasses the following practices (Shire of AMR, 2022):

- Promoting the participation of Indigenous people (Wardandi Noongar) and the preservation of their culture.
- Investing in conservation and management projects of local water bodies, flora, and fauna.
- Engaging local farmers and viticulturalists in sustainable agriculture practices to increase biodiversity, capture carbon, and retain water.
- Increasing awareness of climate change and taking concrete steps to achieve zero emissions by 2030 (installation of solar panels on Shire buildings, shift towards green energy sources, offsetting carbon emissions, funding relevant research).
- Investing in infrastructure and communication strategies that promote active transport, mainly hiking and cycling.
- Improving waste management and reducing plastic use.
- Providing economic, marketing, and technical support to local business by means of funding local events, organising campaigns, and establishing partnerships with other business support organisations.

- Empowering local organisations and advocating environmental and social justice claims on their behalf in state and Federal instances.

As noted, these activities influence a shift in the tourism sector including even those firms reluctant to change. As such, it is possible to infer that the eco-destination accreditation reduces the cognitive distance – in terms of sustainability-related knowledge, values, and routines – between the different components of the tourism sector. Therefore, the accreditation can set exemplary sustainable tourism practices that can potentially be replicated. For instance, Interviewee 53, manager of an eco-certified tourism business indicated:

[T]hat is why businesses like ours have to really commit to sustainability practices, because we then become (...) a shining example of a successful business that can actually do the right thing environmentally and still maintain high levels of customer service and customer feedback.

[Interviewee 53, May 2021]

As more tourism firms, residents, visitors, and local authorities get involved in the eco-destination commitments, the firms that are not entirely convinced about the necessity of a sustainability transition in tourism will find themselves in a destination that requires them to engage with sustainable tourism. For instance, before the AMR became an eco-destination, Interviewee 3, an independent researcher, mentioned:

[T]here are plenty of tourism businesses who do not care at all about sustainability, and there is no way that the state [public authorities] cannot influence them to care more whether that is through rules and regulations (...) or an accreditation process.

[Interviewee 3, February 2021]

Not only does the eco-destination impact on the tourism sector, but also on other related industries or sectors (viticulture, agriculture, farming, waste management). As a representative of Ecotourism Australia (Interviewee 12) explained:

[The accredited eco-destinations] use the programme as a starting point for just looking at the tourism industry, but they [then] realise that it (tourism) is only one component of the entire destination and interlaced with events, retail, agriculture, they are all related. [Hence] the whole supply chain needs to be part of it [the eco-destination programme].

[Interviewee 12, June 2021]

In that sense, the encompassing nature of the eco-destination accreditation has the potential to not only shift the tourism sector in the AMR, but also to promote sustainability practices in other related industries. This is important as the eco-destination programme takes advantage of the complexity of tourism which, as discussed in Chapter 3, consists of several industries and sectors. Hopefully, noticeable changes in the AMR could result in a stronger engagement of Busselton.

Second, closely related to the previous point, eco-destination accreditation can work as a filter mechanism that mostly allows the entry of tourism firms that are engaged with rules and values established by the eco-destination. In that sense, eco-destination accreditation can promote related variety (see Frenken et al., 2007; Neffke et al., 2011) at the destination by means of attracting tourism stakeholders that have a high engagement with sustainable tourism. For instance, Interviewee 49, a manager from a local tourism firm, declared that:

[External] investment is a good thing, but it has to be mindful investment because you have to understand the market here (...) So, if there is an international investor, then you hope that the investment is well guided in terms of what the destination expects.

[Interviewee 49, May 2021]

Indeed, eco-destination accreditation has the potential to bridge the expectations of external investors with those of the tourism sector at the destination. It could result in a better rapport between new tourism firms entering the destination, and the local authorities, residents, and established local firms.

Third, the eco-destination accreditation builds on sustainable tourism. Hence, it widens the focus from tourism economic growth to encompass the environmental and social impact of tourism. As noted in the sustainability-related practices that the AMR has committed to, none of them demands a reduction in the number of visitors or development of strategies to attract particular market segments. On the contrary, by means of encompassing environmental and social considerations, the eco-destination accreditation has the potential to ensure the strength of existing and an emergence of new sustainability-related practices while removing those that are considered unsustainable. In this regard, the local council has a pivotal role, as explained by a representative of the AMR council (Interviewee 37):



[P]art of that [the implementation of the eco-destination accreditation] is also around the business community and the way we (as the local council) incentivise them [tourism sector] to be more sustainable and recognise them in their sustainability efforts. So, I think a lot of things will become clear through this process (...)

[Interviewee 37, March 2021]

By the same token, Interviewee 47 (a manager of a wine-tourism business) argues that while the accreditation does not ensure a fully sustainable destination, it does put the concern about the environment at the centre of the decision-making and policymaking processes. But clearly eco-destination accreditation does not only put the environmental aspect at its core as social and cultural elements are also included (for instance, it can represent an opportunity for the emergence of more Indigenous-led firms). In that sense, by means of achieving and maintaining a long-term commitment with this accreditation, the tourism sector in the AMR could potentially demonstrate relative decoupling between tourism-based economic growth and its environmental and social impacts (see UNEP, 2014, 2011b; UNWTO and UNEP, 2012). Nonetheless, the mechanism is not exempt of hurdles which are mainly related to governance issues such as bureaucracy, onerous application processes, and flaws in the horizontal relationship (see subsection 9.2.2).

### 9.3.5. Intermediary actors

Intermediary actors act as a catalyst for sustainability transitions (see Kivimaa et al., 2019). In the MRR it is possible to notice their influence in the emergence, development, and structuration of sustainability initiatives (see Chapter 7). As such, their aims and scope have a path-shaping potential as they contribute to the diffusion of knowledge in the destination, interactions between visitors and sustainable tourism initiatives, and the creation of space for the development of potential green innovation. According to the data analysis, the main intermediary actors are AMR Clean Community Energy, DBCA, Ecotourism Australia, MRBTA, Nature Conservation Margaret River, Transition Town Margaret River, and Undalup Association (in alphabetical order). Organising these actors according to Kivimaa et al.'s (2019) typology (see Chapter 4) could provide a better understanding of their role (see Table 23).

Table 23: Typology of intermediary actors in the MRR, based on Kivimaa et al. (2019, p. 1069)

Type of intermediary actor	Intermediary actor in the MRR	Role or main activities
Systemic intermediary	Ecotourism Australia	External actor that is regarded as neutral although it pursues clear sustainability goals (eco-certified tourism businesses and eco-destination). This actor bridges global actors, such as Global Sustainable Tourism Council and UNWTO, with local actors in the MRR.
	Nature Conservation Margaret River	Actor with strong relationships with regime and niche levels. This actor bridges regime actors such as the local councils and DMOs with local grassroots organisations. It also provides technical information to actors at both levels.
	ASW Tourism Observatory	External actor that provides information for the articulation of regime actors such as tourism firms, DMOs, and local and WA authorities. In turn, the observatory reports provide scientific and technical evidence for actors at the niche level.
Regime-based intermediary	MRBTA	Regime actor interested in the conservation of the destination's natural, and cultural and heritage capital for the successful operation of the tourism sector. It creates spaces for the emergence of green innovation.
	DBCA	This regime actor provides space for the incorporation of sustainability-related initiatives within the destination's natural parks.
Niche intermediary	Transition Town Margaret River	This niche actor provides a space for the interaction of ideas and emergence of niches that also contribute towards sustainability transitions.
	Undalup Association	This actor facilitates the incorporation and representation of Indigenous culture and people in the tourism sector.
User intermediary	AMR Clean Community Centre	This actor operates at the niche level and facilitates the interactions between green energy infrastructure providers and small to medium tourism firms interested in sustainability-related initiatives.

As the MRR evolved, these actors have been emerging and becoming stronger and determinant in the interaction of actors within and outside the destination. In that sense, it is possible to argue that intermediary actors are pivotal for the transplantation of knowledge from other regions and scales as in the case of Ecotourism Australia bridging global and destination actors. In turn, the destination exhibits one of the few cases mentioned by Geels (2011) where regime actors engage with sustainability transitions. While the interests of the MRBTA could be related to securing the economic growth of the tourism sector, it is undeniable that their efforts also commit the destination to sustainable tourism. In the case of the DBCA, their role as a regime actor appears as a *gatekeeper* of the national parks at the destination. Due to their legal obligations, they support spaces for the interaction between still incipient types of tourism in the MRR (for instance, Indigenous tourism) and visitors. Intermediary actors at the niche level such as Transition Town MR and Undalup Association have created spaces for the diffusion of knowledge between niches contributing to their structuration. Finally, AMR Clean Community Centre engages local tourism firms with green economy providers who, in turn, complement the efforts of the AMR council in relation to the eco-destination accreditation.

All identified path-shaping forces can be mapped onto Martin and Sunley's (2006) unlocking mechanisms which are, in turn, sources of path-creation as discussed in Chapter 4. Since these path-shaping forces take place at the destination level, this thesis refers to them as destination path-shaping forces rather than regional. Table 24 classifies each of them according to the potential source of regional path-creation. While most of them fall into one of the categories, due to their dynamic and supportive nature intermediary actors are an element that can be related to all the identified categories.

Table 24: Source of destination path-creation in the MRR, based on Martin and Sunley (2006, p. 420)

Sources of regional path-creation	Destination path-creation identified in the MRR
Local creation	Local sustainability ethos has emerged from within the region to advocate and raise awareness of the trajectory of the tourism sector. As such, by means of putting concerns about the destinations' environment, culture, and residents this path-shaping factor has the potential to promote a shift towards a more sustainable destination.
Transplantation from elsewhere	Visitors' environmental awareness is a global gradual phenomenon that brings notions of sustainability to the destination. As such, the import of sustainability-related practices to satisfy a growing global market can act as an impulse for the destination towards a more sustainable tourism scenario.
Heterogeneity and diversity	Destination branding presents the MRR as a diverse destination with a large range of experiences (wine-tourism, surf, nature-based tourism, adventure tourism, wellbeing tourism, and others). Since the destination branding not only markets the destination but also contributes to steer the destination's trajectory, it promotes heterogeneity and diversity which are pivotal for the emergence of green innovation.
Upgrading of existing industries	Destination-wide accreditation mechanisms present an opportunity to upgrade (shift) the entire destination towards a more sustainable scenario. These mechanisms can result in the revitalisation of the tourism sector contributing to its uniqueness and positioning as a global sustainable tourist destination.

Additionally, the analysis of path-shaping forces reflects the *trinity of change* (see Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2020). The latter allows a fine-grained attention to agency as a distributed, diverse, and embedded path-shaping factor (Garud and Karnøe, 2001). The trinity of change considers three factors that condition the effectiveness of a path-shaping process, namely innovative entrepreneurship, institutional entrepreneurship, and place-based leadership (see Chapter 4).

Due to the complexity and interrelatedness of the five path-shaping factors, it is more suitable to address them together. The local sustainability ethos appears as a factor that encourages action and initiatives towards sustainable tourism. This factor contributes to the emergence of green entrepreneurs who bear in mind that tourism in the destination can only be successful if it reduces or mitigates its environmental

and social impact. In the same vein, the adaptation of tourism firms to the influence of a growing market of environmental aware visitors by means of incorporating green innovations into their practices and infrastructure also exhibits the innovative entrepreneurship in the MRR. In addition to tourism firms, public authorities, supportive organisations, and DMOs also adapt to that external influence and deploy marketing strategies and investment in infrastructure to attract visitors. The latter exhibits institutional entrepreneurship as those institutional components of the destination are opportunity-oriented.

Destination branding corresponds with the efforts of public tourism authorities at the destination level as well as DMOs to market the MRR as a clean, green, and distinct destinations favour the emergence of entrepreneur and green innovations that align with the destination branding and deter those industries or sectors that could undermine the potential for a more sustainable tourism trajectory. The destination branding has been strongly reinforced – only in the AMR – by the eco-destination certification which is a promising key factor for the sustainability of the destination. This path-shaping factor demonstrates the commitment of the AMR council to sustainable tourism and, at the same time, encourages the emergence of green innovation in the tourism sector. This accreditation has demanded a wide budget, time, and effort from the council and the MRBTA and represents a long-term pledge for the sustainability of the MRR. As a long-term pledge, the eco-destination accreditation represents a risk for the institutions involved; however, if the accreditation brings positive results and Busselton is also accredited, it could represent a milestone in the evolution of the MRR towards becoming a global sustainability destination.

Considering that all the actors involved in the identified path-shaping process have their own agenda, interests, and motivations, the role of place-based leadership is important. This component of the trinity of change refers to the role of those leaders that promote collective development and a shared vision about the future of the entire destination. Certainly, the eco-destination accreditation process led in the MRR by the AMR council and MRBTA is a clear example of place-based leadership as they use accreditation to promote a collective shift towards a more sustainable destination. It is also important to acknowledge the role of the iconic tourism firms

that engage with the accreditation as their decisions and actions are taken as exemplary in the destination. Here, it is relevant to indicate the role of systemic, regime-based, and niche intermediaries as their linkages with actors at the landscape, regime, and niche levels contribute to shape a collective vision of where the destination should be steered to. Therefore, this analysis suggests that a single path-shaping factor might not have the enough potential to break the path-dependent trajectory of the evolution and create a sustainable tourism path.

As noted, the tourism sector in the MRR is subject to a constant interplay of path-dependent and path-shaping forces. The following section presents a summary and conclusions and prepares the ground for the final empirical chapter.

#### **9.4. Summary and conclusions**

This last empirical chapter has presented the path-dependent and path-shaping forces taking place at the destination. This relates to the path-as-process approach where path-creation is latent in processes of path-dependence (Hirsch and Gillespie, 2001; Ma and Hassink, 2014; Martin, 2010; Martin and Sunley, 2010, 2006). This chapter answer directly to the third and fourth research questions. Regarding the third research question, this chapter has identified five path-dependent factors. They are manifestations of the interaction between regime actors, regime rules, and the tourism sector (socio-technical system). Their degree of influence depends on their embeddedness in the destinations' history and geography. As such, there are factors such as pro-growth ideology that is closely related to the frontier ideology that was introduced into the destination in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are also factors such as governance issues and engagement with transient labour that are related to the institutionalisation of particular forms of interaction between authorities in the case of the former and between tourism firms, local labour, and transient labour in the case of the latter.

Regarding the fourth research question, the chapter identified five path-shaping factors that, by contrast to the previous factors, attempt to break the path-dependent trajectory of the tourism sector in the MRR. These factors do not emerge in isolation; instead they are related to the current destination trajectory and are a manifestation of mindful deviation. This means that the actors involved in path-shaping forces are

aware of the path-dependent factors constraining the tourism sector in the MRR and promote alternative forms of tourism more closely linked to sustainable tourism. These factors altogether represent a promising sustainability transition in the MRR as they reflect the trinity of change suggested by Grillitsch and Sotarauta (2020). This sustainability transition occurs as an interplay between niches, closely related to the path-shaping factors, and the dominant path-dependent tourism regime. Both niches and regime, are influenced in multiple forms by a landscape. Therefore, this chapter addresses the long-term, complex, multi-actor, and multi-scalar nature of sustainability transitions (see Geels, 2005a; Köhler et al., 2019). Finally, the next chapter presents a summary of the entire thesis as well as the empirical and theoretical contributions that this research has made.

## Chapter 10.

### Conclusions: The historical and sustainability transitions in the Margaret River region

*“[Sustainable tourism] is a very tricky one because how do you keep tourism to have a light footprint without creating activities for people to do?”*

*(Interviewee 31)*

#### 10.1. Introduction

This final chapter summarises the main findings of this research, discusses its theoretical and methodological contributions and limitations, and provides recommendations for further research. Instead of summarising the thesis chapter by chapter, Chapter 10 organises the summary and conclusions in three sections. Section 10.2 presents the empirical conclusions derived from this thesis in reference to the five research questions. The next section (10.3) discusses the main theoretical contributions of this thesis to sustainability transitions research, tourism geography, and evolutionary economic geography. Finally, section 10.4 details the theoretical and methodological limitations of this research and identifies promising research directions for the future.

#### 10.2. Summary of findings

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the transformations of the MRR as a tourist destination by means of addressing the five research questions indicated in Chapter 1. Building on the findings analysed in Chapters 6 to 9, the following subsections summarise the main findings of this research project.

10.2.1. How do the challenges to the tourism industry in the MRR and the emerging responses to them influence the sustainability of the destination?

The first research question is addressed in Chapter 7. The chapter examined the main challenges that the tourism industry in the MRR is facing and the sustainability-related initiatives that have emerged in the region as a response. Chapter 7 identified 12 challenges and 56 sustainability-related initiatives (grouped into 13



categories). Based on the findings, the chapter argued that the tourism industry in the MRR is aware of the negative impacts of tourism in the destination and that various tourism stakeholders and grassroots organisations are emerging to promote a transition towards a more sustainable destination. Among the emerging initiatives, those focusing on conserving natural capital, promoting a sustainable destination and businesses, and raising visitors' awareness, are the most promising ones. The chapter also identified that the initiatives are diverse in nature (bottom-up and top-down), multi-scalar, and multi-actor. The fact that there are initiatives emerging mainly from within the destination indicates that the tourism sector in the MRR is not static but instead experiences the same struggle between stability and change which is common in other regional sectors and industries transitioning towards sustainability (see Köhler et al., 2019). Hence, Chapter 7 concluded that the MRR as a tourist destination is undergoing a much-needed sustainability transition.

#### 10.2.2. How advanced is the MRR's transition to more sustainable forms of tourism as a result of the sustainability-related initiatives taking place at the destination?

Chapter 8 analysed the sustainability transition identified in Chapter 7 using the EEG / MLP framework in order to answer the second research question. As part of the framework, Chapter 8 utilised Geels's (2004a) phases of transitions to identify how much progress the destination has made towards sustainable tourism. In that sense, this chapter concluded that, by the end of this project's fieldwork stage, the MRR as a tourist destination had reached the second phase of its sustainability transition after going through an interphase period and a first phase. The interphase period refers to the overlap between the last phase of the previous transition (addressed in Chapter 6) and the phase zero of the sustainability transition. During the interphase period (1990s – 2000s), DMOs strengthened their presence and position in the destination, the diversity of tourism-related firms in the destination increased, and the sustainability ethos became more evident in the destination. In the following phase (2010 – 2019), niches with a clear focus on sustainable tourism (for examples, eco-friendly businesses, eco-destination accreditation schemes, and grassroots initiatives) emerged in the destination, underpinned by an increasing local sustainability ethos. The focus of the tourism industry in the MRR on creating a

sustainable destination brand benefited those emerging niches. In the second phase, those sustainability-related niches increased their structuration and began to influence systematic changes in the tourism regime. For instance, AMR became an accredited eco-destination while various grassroots organisations received political support. Unfortunately, the second phase of the transition was abruptly interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In that sense, Chapter 8 concluded that the progress of the MRR as a tourist destination reached a second phase, which entailed a higher structuration of niches and an incipient disruption of the regime, which was in turn interrupted by the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on the sustainability transition is addressed in subsection 10.2.4.

10.2.3. What are the path-dependent factors and how do they influence the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR? And what are the path-shaping factors and how do they influence the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR?

The third and fourth research questions can be addressed together. While the path-dependent and path-shaping factors taking place at the destination are indirectly mentioned along the empirical chapters, it is Chapter 9 that directly identified and analysed them. It is important to mention that the analysis and conclusions in Chapter 9 are underpinned by the analysis and conclusions of Chapter 6. Chapter 9 focused on the path-dependent and path-shaping forces that influence the trajectory of the tourism sector in the MRR. The path-dependent forces include geographically and historically embedded factors such as the following:

- Pro-growth ideology related to the frontier ideology noted in Chapter 6,
- Governance issues, such as the flawed relationship between AMR and Busselton, that have a direct impact on the transition towards a more sustainable destination,
- Hurdles to the formation of local knowledge – pivotal for path-creation – due to the limited engagement with transient labour force,
- Deterministic understanding of the destination evolution which contributes to conflicts and differences between regime and niche actors, and

- Dependence on natural and heritage resources (although it is not necessarily a negative source of path-dependence, see, for instance, Ma and Hassink, 2013).

While the destination has been able to promote constant renewals as a manifestation of sequences of positive lock-ins (see Brekke, 2015), the risk of a lock-in scenario and institutional rigidification increases, and destructive competition also grows. As such, the need for path-creation focused on sustainability (in other words, an effective sustainability transition in tourism) also increases.

It is often the case that path-dependence and path-creation take place simultaneously in a region (Hirsch and Gillespie, 2001; Martin and Sunley, 2006; Schienstock, 2007) or, as in the case of this thesis, destination. Chapter 9 also identified and analysed the following path-shaping factors:

- A strong local sustainability ethos that is related to the existing concerns about the region's natural capital, exacerbated by the wave of new residents in the 1960s-1970s (see Chapter 6),
- Destination branding which promotes a common vision of a green destination towards visitors but also onto the tourism regime and niche actors,
- Visitors' environmental awareness which is a global process creating potential profitable opportunities for sustainable business in the MRR,
- Destination-wide accreditation which is a pivotal force steering the destination towards a more sustainable scenario, and
- Intermediary actors who have had an important role in the growing articulation and structuration of niches (see Kivimaa et al., 2019).

The interaction between the different path-shaping factors have the potential to create a new path as they relate to the trinity of change that, according to Grillitsch and Sotarauta (2020), has proven capable of disrupting regimes and incumbent actors.

Considering the path-dependent and path-shaping forces taking place in the destination, this thesis concludes that the ongoing sustainability transition is a constant struggle between niche and regime actors. As noted, the path-dependent forces are embedded in the regime and support its continuity by means of steering actions and rules that benefit economic growth at the expense of environmental and social outcomes. In turn, the path-shaping forces are related to the niches and act as forces that articulate their efforts, visions, and strategies to disrupt the regime. Indeed, Chapter 9 suggested that the local sustainability ethos is the cornerstone of the sustainability transition taking place in the MRR as niches have built on it. However, it is important to acknowledge that path-dependence factors, such as pro-growth ideology and reliance on transient labour force, represent one of the most powerful obstacles for the transition as they are embedded in the destination's culture and history. Therefore, Chapter 9's – and Chapter 6's – answer to the third and fourth research questions is that the sustainability transition in the MRR is highly path-dependent and that the path-shaping potential requires an important boost to entirely break the path-dependent process taking place at the destination and to effectively bring the MRR to a more sustainable future. That boost should stem from authorities leading key sustainability-related strategies and initiatives, political actors already working together with grassroots, and government agencies in charge of Federal, state, and local tourism policies and strategies.

#### 10.2.4. What is the transformational potential of the COVID-19 pandemic to foster sustainability transitions in the MRR?

Finally, Chapter 8 discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the destination and on the ongoing sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR. When this research question was incorporated to the research project, scholars were cautiously optimistic about the future of tourism after the pandemic (see, for example, Brouder, 2020; Haywood, 2020; Nepal, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020). However, the analysis of the pandemic's impact on the destination indicates that COVID-19 was not entirely transformative (this does not mean that the overall impact of the pandemic in the MRR was insignificant).

The impact of the pandemic on the destination was dynamic and it changed over time. In the period between March and June 2020, the destination significantly

struggled to survive as its main source of revenue (visitors) almost entirely disappeared. As the restrictions eased and regional travel was allowed, the destination experienced a post-COVID-19 tourism boom which, on the one hand, represented an economic relief for most tourism businesses, while on the other hand, it revealed many challenges growing in the background of the destination (see Chapter 7). For instance, the overreliance on transient labour and the lack of engagement with local labour, the focus on international visitors as opposed to domestic visitors, and the housing crisis were some of the key problems that the pandemic exposed. As such, initiatives from niches and regime actors became relevant in addressing these issues.

Chapter 8 also identified the impact of the pandemic on the ongoing sustainability transition in the MRR. The pandemic, as a disruptive landscape force, abruptly stopped that transition. The disruption triggered some – apparently – temporary innovation to cope with the lack of international visitors and promoted more attention to the domestic market. As such, it is possible that the ongoing sustainability transition incorporates the lessons learnt during the pandemic. Chapter 8 determines three potential pathways that the recovery of the tourism industry in the MRR might follow: business-as-usual (BAU), economic-focused, and sustainability-related. Out of the three possible future scenarios, participants consider that a sustainability-related pathway has potential to take place in the MRR. Nonetheless, the participants are also aware that without bottom-up initiatives, other scenarios are possible such as a total return to BAU or a scenario with a strong focus on economic aspects to the detriment of the regions' natural capital. In that sense, Chapter 8's answer to the final research question is that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a minor but relevant transformational effect on the tourism regime in the MRR and, therefore, it could accelerate the ongoing sustainability transition, although further research is required here. Indeed, the rippling effects of the pandemic are yet to be seen. The fact that the pandemic has not dismantled grassroots organisations or diminished the role of intermediary actors, and instead has drawn the attention of regime actors to structural problems, it is possible to be optimistic about the post-pandemic scenarios.

All in all, the findings of this thesis indicate that the MRR is a destination that has already undergone a drastic transition. While such transition was underpinned by new industries and demographic changes in a changing political and economic global landscape, it is possible to point out to some policies and frameworks that played an important role. For instance, Federal policies in the post-war era promoted employment and higher wages that – while positive for workers – were not beneficial for some industries such as the dairy one in MRR which struggled with the increasing cost of labour and land (see for instance, Flood Chavez et al., 2023). While during the first transition it is possible to notice an active role by the Federal and WA authorities, during the second transition such role progressively decreases. In that case, it is possible to indicate that changes at the landscape level once again were pivotal as the ongoing deregulation of the economy was a process that took place globally – and clearly in Australia (see for instance Forrestal and Jordan, 2017). Such deregulation, a result of global neoliberal measures in the 1980s, allowed private organisations to have a more active role such as AMRTA and GBTA – that later merged into MRBTA – which had an important role in the tourism policymaking in the MRR. A clear example of their role is MRBTA's role in the certification of AMR as an eco-destination, a key event in the sustainability transition.

Despite the more active role of private tourism organisations in the MRR, authorities are still a key actor. While it is true that Federal and WA state authorities are now more active in the promotion of the country or region to international markets as a result of the current global neoliberalisation of the economy, local governments are becoming more protagonists. AMR with concrete actions toward sustainable tourism is a good example of good governance towards sustainable tourism. Their Climate Action Plan 2020-2030 which encompasses various goals beyond tourism (such as agriculture, transport, retail) followed by a long process of community engagement demonstrates that it is possible to trigger a sustainability transition in tourism. Especially because it demonstrates that when regime actors can voluntarily benefit the emergence of green niches and bridge grassroots organisations with higher levels of government. It is hoped that the city of Busselton will take similar actions in the near future and, as a result, the MRR can be an eco-destination.

### **10.3. Theoretical and methodological contributions**

Building on the findings summarised in the previous section, the research on sustainability transitions in tourism in the MRR has yielded relevant theoretical implications. For instance, this thesis has helped bridge the gap between tourism geography and sustainability transitions research. In fact, this thesis is an important contribution to the emerging sustainability transitions in tourism research agenda (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2022). In the same vein, this thesis also represents a contribution to emerging research on historical transitions in tourism. In terms of methodological contributions, this thesis contributes to expanding the applicability of the MLP to the evolution of tourism destinations. While these contributions are diverse and interrelated, they can be organised into four categories: contributions to sustainability transitions research, contributions to the MLP, contributions to tourism geography, and contributions to the debate on sustainable tourism.

#### **10.3.1. Contributions to sustainability transitions research**

In terms of sustainability transitions research, the most evident contribution lies in addressing a – surprisingly – overlooked sector such as tourism. Despite the inherent features of tourism such as it being a complex geographical phenomenon, a relatively low-technology sector that encompasses several related industries, and allegedly not a very innovative one, this thesis has demonstrated that tourism is susceptible to analysis using concepts and frameworks from sustainability transitions research. As such, this thesis responds to Niewiadomski and Brouder's (2022) recent call for bridging the gap between the sustainability transitions research and the study of tourism. More specifically, this thesis provides contributions aligned with these authors' research agenda. For instance, the thesis identifies path-dependent factors hindering sustainability transitions as deeply embedded in the region's history and geography as well as path-shaping forces promoting a higher structuration of green niches in the destination. As such, this thesis provides evidence that corroborates Niewiadomski and Brouder's (2022) approach to sustainability transitions.

Continuing with theoretical contributions to sustainability transitions research, this thesis responds to Kivimaa et al.'s (2019) call for identifying the role of intermediary

actors in the phases of sustainability transitions. Indeed, this thesis has put emphasis on the role of systemic, regime-based, and niche intermediaries in the emergence of niches, the transference of knowledge between the three MLP analytical levels, and the increasing structuration of niches. The thesis argues that intermediary actors are pivotal for sustainability transitions, especially in creating bridges between landscape organisations, and regime and niche actors. In addition, it is possible to notice that regime actors can become intermediary actors when their agency switches from reproducing regime rules to adapting needed niche innovations. Such a switch, which could be temporary, relates to Geels's (2011) suggestion that regime actors can accelerate transition if they engage with particular niches. As a result, the role of intermediary actors is an important path-shaping force to consider in sustainability transitions research.

#### 10.3.2. Contributions to the multi-level perspective

Another relevant theoretical – and methodological – contribution that this thesis has made to sustainability transitions research relates to the MLP. Indeed, this thesis has expanded the applicability of the MLP to the evolution of a low-technology and service-based sector such as tourism. Although there are already few studies using the MLP to address tourism (see for instance Amore et al., 2018; Falcone, 2019), their approach to the evolution of tourism towards more sustainable scenarios has been rather tangential. By contrast, this thesis provides a rich in-depth analysis of the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR using Geels's (2004a) transition phases and Geels and Shott's (2007) transition pathways frameworks. By the same token, while not strictly linked to sustainability transitions, this thesis also took the additional task of demonstrating that the MLP is useful to address historical transitions in the tourism sector (see Chapter 6) as it has been used to explore historical transitions in other industries such as energy and transport (see Geels, 2005a). In this regard, this thesis reinforces the methodological basis that documentary analysis and recruitment of participant with access to important historical information are pivotal elements in designing an adequate research strategy that addresses historical transitions.

Whether to address historical or sustainability transitions, the adoption of the MLP in the analysis of the tourism sector has produced important theoretical implications. In



that sense, the thesis has made five important theoretical contributions to the MLP. First, this thesis positions Booyens and Rogerson's (2016a, see also Booyens and Rogerson 2016b) innovations typology as a pivotal framework to identify niches in tourism, especially in sustainability transitions (see Geels, 2011; Köhler et al., 2019). Indeed, as this thesis does in Chapter 8, by means of identifying radical innovations in the MRR, it is possible to define the protected spaces where these innovations emerged and developed, as well as the actors involved. Second, the role of destination branding which, while produced and reproduced by the regime, can potentially have an influential role in the collective vision of niches. In other words, this thesis identifies that certain regime rules can enable global niches (see Geels and Raven, 2006). In turn, it can also be suggested that destination branding relates to the role of regimes as a selection and retention mechanism (Geels, 2002a). However, the latter would require further research which is elaborated in section 10.4.

Third, the role of visitors in tourism is completely different to those of users in other sectors or industries. Indeed, visitors play an important role in the production of the tourism experience (see Smith, 1994) and can geographically move between regimes (and niches) while also experiencing landscape changes. As a result, visitors, in contrast to users in other sectors, play an important role in motivating changes at the regime and niche level, which needs further research. At this point, the thesis suggests that visitors can be niche, regime, and landscape actors. Fourth, a closer focus on the landscape processes and their influence on historical and sustainability transitions indicates that landscape forces do not act as a single entity. Instead, elements at the landscape level can be contested such as the neoliberal agenda and the increasing strong sustainability stances. As a result, it is possible to suggest that the typology of transition pathways (Geels and Schot, 2007) should acknowledge that landscape factors can have simultaneously a disruptive and reinforcing relationship with the regime level. A final contribution of this thesis to the MLP has been a consequence of using EEG as a complementary approach. This EEG / MLP framework for analysing historical and sustainability transitions has produced an important theoretical contribution, namely *the phase zero* and *the interphase period*. The phase zero refers to the pre-existing conditions that have contributed to the consolidation of the regime and have set a fertile ground for the

later emergence of innovation niches. This phase zero can be noticed in both historical and sustainability transitions. Especially, in the case of the latter, it is possible to notice an overlap between the phase zero and the remnants of the last phase of the historical transition, which has been referred to as an interphase period.

### 10.3.3. Contributions to tourism geography

The use of sustainability transitions research and the MLP in relation to tourism has produced relevant contributions to tourism geography. The most relevant contribution is the use of the tourist destination as a geographical unit of analysis to address historical and sustainability transitions. As noted in the empirical chapters, the evolution of the tourism sector, based on place-specific attributes pertaining to a region, produces the formation of the tourist destination. As such, the tourist destination does not necessarily overlap with administrative or political boundaries but can encompass more than one territorial unit as in the case of the MRR which is a tourist destination encompassing Augusta – Margaret River (AMR) and Busselton. Despite the horizontal differences between both local government areas, the use of the tourist destination as the unit of analysis for transitions has helped identify the place-specific elements promoting and hindering transitions within and outside the destination.

Considering the destination as the unit of analysis for sustainability transitions made it possible to identify place-specific path-dependent and path-shaping factors. Regarding the path-dependent factors, the pro-growth ideology appeared as one of the most important ones, especially because it is directly related to the frontier ideology brought more than a hundred years ago by settler colonisers. As such, it is possible to infer that while regimes can change (from a cave-focused regime to a diverse regime), there are elements that are strongly embedded in the destination's history and geography and that are persistent and hard to address. The pro-growth ideology is also deeply influenced by the global neoliberal processes and the current capitalist mode of production. In that sense, it is possible to suggest that the pro-growth ideology, although embedded in the destination, might be present in other destinations with similar historical contexts in Australia and other countries. Hence, it is possible to suggest that this element could be related to the notion of global

regimes, suggested by Fuenfschilling and Binz (2018). Yet, it might require further investigation.

Regarding the path-shaping factors, one of the most important place-specific path-shaping factors is the local sustainability ethos. While it is possible to indicate that the influx of new visitors during the 1960s–1970s to the region was responsible for bringing this ethos to the region, the historical analysis of the destination identifies embryonic manifestations of a similar ethos in the activities promoting the conservation of caves and native forests (see Chapter 6). As such, it is possible to argue that the local sustainability ethos has been a path-shaping factor influencing the MRR almost since the emergence of leisure tourism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to this argument, it is possible to suggest that, as argued by Sanders (2006), tourism represents an opportunity to bridge the past with the present. Recent tourism niches in the destination revalue the importance of Aboriginal culture and promote spaces where Aboriginal people can develop a more vital role in the evolution of the MRR towards more sustainable forms of tourism.

#### 10.3.4. Contributions to sustainable tourism

The last category of theoretical contributions relates to the long-term debate on sustainable tourism. In that regard, this thesis argues that the use of sustainability transitions framework such as the MLP – as used in this thesis – and other frameworks (see, for example, Gössling et al., 2012 for transition management) is necessary to understand the evolution of tourist destinations and the role of stakeholders, institutions, and innovation. As such, this thesis calls for incorporating a sustainability transitions perspective into research on sustainable tourism which would address the pursuit of sustainable tourism as a long-term, contested, multi-actor, multi-scalar, and place-specific sustainability transition process and not anymore as a mere objective. Indeed, this thesis has demonstrated that even at the destination level the incorporation of sustainability principles is far from being *less complex* as inferred by Sharpley (2014b) (see Chapter 3). If anything, a focus on the destination level allows researchers to pay more attention to the role of grassroots organisations that in many cases are the most powerful engine for a sustainability transition in tourism. In turn, this thesis also suggests that a sustainability transitions research approach to tourism should identify in detail the role of visitors and their

growing environmental awareness. While this environmental awareness is globally growing, it is up to the destinations to adapt and use this global gradual change as an opportunity to engage more with pro-sustainable tourists. The following section presents the limitations of this study and an agenda for further research.

#### **10.4. Research limitations and recommendations for further research**

Despite being one of the first research attempts to address the evolution of the tourism sector from a combined EEG / MLP perspective, it is necessary to recognise those elements, mainly theoretical and methodological, that have limited the research.

In terms of the theoretical limitations, as noted in Chapter 4, to the knowledge of the author, there is no comprehensive sustainability transitions research on the evolution of the tourism sector using the MLP. As a result, this research was limited by the lack of previous research. Although it allowed the research to be creative, it also limited the extent of the discussion and made comparisons impossible. For instance, this research proposes the destination as the geographical unit of analysis for sustainability transitions in tourism which would need further debate and discussion.

In a different context, despite tourism being a sector that encompasses and is related to other sectors and industries, this research did not focus on sustainability transitions that could be taking place in the transport or energy industries in the region. The researcher took this decision to restrict the analysis to the tourism sector and the closest related sectors and industries. Yet, the researcher acknowledges that this decision represents a limitation to the research as it is possible that sustainability transitions in other industries could have influenced the tourism sector. For instance, while not related to sustainability transitions, Flood Chavez et al. (2023) identify various interactions between tourism and other regional industries throughout the MRR's history. Although, this research did consider initiatives related to green energy transitions such as the installation of solar panels or the use of solar heating systems.

The last theoretical limitation relates to those participants who exhibited a strong sustainability stance. In their view, sustainability transitions will only take place if the

capitalist mode of production ceases. This view, while respectable, is beyond the scope of this research and that of sustainability transitions research. In fact, sustainability transitions research focuses on the meso-level rather than on the macro-level where changes in the capitalist system might occur (Geels, 2004; Köhler et al., 2019). However, the author acknowledges that sustainability transitions could have the potential to promote changes at the macro-level, including in the current mode of capitalist production.

In terms of the methodological limitations, the most relevant ones are the time scope of the research project, the influence of COVID-19 on the participants and the research, and the differentiated involvement between the two local authorities within the destination. The first one refers to the still unfolding sustainability transition in tourism taking place in the MRR. As such, this research project can only infer about the continuity of the second phase of that transition. The same applies to the transformational potential of the COVID-19 pandemic. While it has been argued that the pandemic has not entirely disrupted the local sustainability ethos or the role of intermediary actors, it requires a longer period of analysis to determine the ripple effects of the pandemic on the destination. By the same token, the COVID-19 pandemic had indeed affected the participants. Most probably, the pandemic made some of them more aware of the impacts of tourism on the destination (and worldwide), which may have resulted in optimistic or pessimistic views about the future. This research is unable to determine whether the participants' views or opinions were necessarily influenced by the pandemic. Therefore, this issue appears as a possible limitation.

In a similar vein, the pandemic also impacted the execution of this research project. For instance, the author was unable to visit the area of study which could have influenced the rapport with the participants (see Chapter 5). In fact, it is possible to argue that the pandemic limited a deeper engagement of the researcher with local actors, and local nature, culture, and heritage. While the case study strategy was meticulously planned, the engagement of potential participants was difficult to foresee. That was the case with Busselton's local authorities who, in contrast to AMR's authorities, referred the researcher to the Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association (MRBTA) rather than offering direct participation. It is possible to

suggest that this differentiated engagement between AMR and Busselton local authorities reflected, to some extent, the flawed horizontal relationship between both local government areas.

Considering the aforementioned limitations, this research project considers it pertinent to recommend a further research agenda. First, since the sustainability transition in tourism in the MRR is still unfolding, more research is needed to follow this transition and identify the rippling effects of the pandemic. As such, using the transition phases or transition pathways, it is possible to conceptualise the transition and the reconfiguration of the existing regime. Another interesting option to analyse the historical and the sustainability transitions is by means of using the other EEG approaches to evolution such as Generalised Darwinism and Complexity Theory. As indicated by Brouder (2014a; see also the chapters in Brouder et al., 2016), the evolution of tourism is susceptible to the analysis from those two perspectives. An initial step could be to use concepts and frameworks of Generalised Darwinism to address the role of destination branding and eco-destination accreditation as selection mechanisms that promote the adaptability of specific tourism businesses.

A second research strand could focus on the multiple and dynamic interactions between tourism and other industries (see, for instance, Breul et al., 2021; Flood Chavez et al., 2023; Stihl, 2022). As noted in the empirical chapters (Chapters 6 to 9), tourism in the MRR has been influenced in multiple forms by other industries and sectors such as timber, dairy, mining, wine, surfing, and oil (see also Flood Chavez et al., 2023). Each of these industries inside and outside the region have contributed to various degrees to the evolution of the current tourism regime. For instance, the timber industry indirectly contributed to the creation of the Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park which is pivotal for the tourism industry in the present. By the same token, the growing and stronger interrelation between tourism and wine industries since the Leeuwin Concert in 1984 resulted in the emergence of a path that is partially related to the tourism and wine paths. This apparent partial path-blending is a topic worth further analysis.

The third, and last, research recommendation refers to the growing differentiation between AMR and Busselton within the same destination. While this research has

assumed the entire MRR as the geographical unit of analysis where the sustainability transition in tourism is taking place, it is undeniable that internal differences are slowly growing between regime members, resulting in a flawed horizontal relationship (see Chapter 9). On the one hand, there is the AMR with not only a discourse on sustainable tourism but concrete steps towards it (eco-destination), while on the other hand, there is Busselton with a stronger commitment to become an event tourism city in WA, although it could have negative implications on the city's natural and social capital, as argued by a number of interviewees living in Busselton. Hence, research that focuses on the impacts of this growing differentiation on the ongoing sustainability transition as well as on initiatives to re-integrate both LGAs are fully recommended. At this point, based on Diemer et al.'s (2022) *regional development trap*, it is pertinent to wonder if more or less sustainability-laden measures taken by one region (or local government area) within a destination could result in a *sustainable destination trap* (see subsection 9.2.2). The latter could be analysed using the AMR and Busselton as a potential comparative case study.

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## Appendix 1: interview guides

Group 1: Representatives of various environmental organisations, NGOs, and other institutions including tourist chambers and DMOs

- Research question 1
  - ✓ How important is the tourism industry for the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What does your organisation understand by sustainable tourism?
  - ✓ What do you think are the main stakeholders in the tourism industry in the Margaret River region that should foster the transition to sustainable tourism?
  - ✓ What are the main current challenges in economic, social, and environmental terms that the region is facing and what are the main responses to those challenges?
  
- Research question 2
  - ✓ How advanced is the transition towards sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What existing policies, guidelines, regulations, and frameworks in the Margaret River region, Western Australia and the country, do you think are fostering or hindering the transition towards sustainable tourism?
  
- Research question 3
  - ✓ How would you describe the mainstream or traditional form of tourism that is carried out in the Margaret River region and how difficult do you find it to transition towards sustainable tourism?
  - ✓ How prepared do you think are your organisation and the institutions related to the tourism industry in the Margaret River region to the changes that sustainable tourism requires?
  - ✓ What historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors in the local, regional, national and global level do you identify as the most influential to the traditional form of tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ How much do you think your organisation contributes to the traditional forms of tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ How much influence do you think that other tourism-related industries have on the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region?
  
- Research question 4
  - ✓ What historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors do you consider could change radically the way the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region is carried out?

- ✓ How important do you think is innovation in social, organisational, and technological terms for the transition of tourism to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region and what innovative contribution is your organisation doing towards such transition?
  - ✓ Which 'windows of opportunity' at the local, regional, national and global level do you think that have appeared for the transition to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What potential economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits do you think the transition to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region could generate?
  - ✓ How much influence in economic, environmental and socio-cultural terms do you think that the transition to sustainable tourism could have in other tourism-related industries in the Margaret River region?
- Research question 5
    - ✓ What influence do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has or has had on the transition towards sustainable tourism in economic, social, and environmental terms?
    - ✓ What innovative policies, measures, and initiatives could you identify the COVID-19 pandemic in the region has fostered?
    - ✓ How would you describe the decisions taken by local, federal, and national authorities to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism sector?

Group 2: Authorities at the local, regional, and national level

- Research question 1
  - ✓ How important is the tourism industry for the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What are the main current challenges in economic, social, and environmental terms that the region is facing and what are the main responses to those challenges?
- Research question 2
  - ✓ How advanced is the transition towards sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region and what do you think are the main challenges towards that transition?
  - ✓ What local, regional, national, and global factors do you think have influence on the policy-making process towards sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What existing policies, guidelines, regulations, and frameworks in the Margaret River region, Western Australia and the country, do you think are fostering the transition towards sustainable tourism?

- Research question 3
  - ✓ How would you describe the mainstream or traditional form of tourism that is carried out in the Margaret River region and how difficult do you find it to transition towards sustainable tourism?
  - ✓ What historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors do you identify as the most influential to the traditional form of tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ How influential are the policies and development guidelines from higher levels of administration such as the South West region, Western Australia, and Australia on the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ How much influence do you think that other tourism-related industries have on the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ How much influence do you think this institution has on the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region?
  
- Research question 4
  - ✓ What historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors do you consider could change radically the way the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region is carried out?
  - ✓ How important do you think is innovation in social, organisational, and technological terms for the transition of tourism to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region and what is the role of this institution regarding innovation towards sustainable tourism?
  - ✓ What strategies do you think that public institutions should follow to foster the transition towards sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What potential economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits do you think the transition to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region could generate?
  - ✓ How much influence does the sustainable development discourses have on the policy-making process towards the transition to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region?
  
- Research question 5
  - ✓ What influence do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has or has had on the transition towards sustainable tourism in economic, social, and environmental terms in the region?
  - ✓ How would you describe the decisions taken by local, federal, and national authorities to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism sector in the region?

### Group 3: Representatives of tourism-related firms

- Research question 1
  - ✓ How important is the tourism industry for the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What are the main current challenges in economic, social, and environmental terms that the region is facing and what are the main responses to those challenges?
  - ✓ What does your organisation understand by sustainable tourism and what contributions is your organisation doing towards it?
  
- Research question 2
  - ✓ How advanced is the transition towards sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region and what do you think are the main challenges towards that transition?
  - ✓ What local, regional, national, and global tourism trends do you think have more influence on the tourism industry and visitor's behaviour in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What existing policies, guidelines, regulations, and frameworks in the Margaret River region, Western Australia and the country, do you think are fostering or hindering the transition towards sustainable tourism?
  
- Research question 3
  - ✓ How would you describe the mainstream or traditional form of tourism that is carried out in the Margaret River region and how difficult do you find it to transition towards sustainable tourism?
  - ✓ How prepared do you think are your organisation, the institutions, and other tourism-related organisations in the Margaret River region to the changes that sustainable tourism requires?
  - ✓ What historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors in the local, regional, national and global level do you identify as the most influential to the traditional form of tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ How much do you think your organisation contributes to the traditional forms of tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ How much influence do you think that other tourism-related industries have on the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region?
  
- Research question 4
  - ✓ What historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors do you consider could change radically the way the traditional tourism in the Margaret River region is carried out?
  - ✓ How important do you think is innovation in social, organisational, and technological terms for the transition of tourism to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region and what innovative contribution is your organisation doing towards such transition?

- ✓ Which *windows of opportunity* at the local, regional, national and global level do you think that have appeared for the transition to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region?
  - ✓ What potential economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits do you think the transition to sustainable tourism in the Margaret River region could generate?
  - ✓ How much influence in economic, environmental and socio-cultural terms do you think that the transition to sustainable tourism could have in other tourism-related industries in the Margaret River region?
- 
- Research question 5
    - ✓ What influence do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has or had had on the transition towards sustainable tourism in economic, social, and environmental terms?
    - ✓ What measures did the company you represent take or are you taking to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism sector and how effective would you consider them?
    - ✓ How would you describe the decisions taken by local, federal, and national authorities to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism sector?



**Appendix 2: Example of data display table pertaining to the 54 interviewees (51 interviews) using Miles and Huberman’s method**

Sections	Themes / Codes / Keywords	Interviewees																																																								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54			
6.4	Historical triggering events	2	2	1	2	0	1	1	1	2	0	3	0	3	0	1	2	4	3	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	0	0	2	1	2	2	2	3	0	0	0	4	1	2	0		
6.2, 6.3, and 6.4	Cave-focused tourism	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
6.4	Dairy influence	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0			
6.4	Emergence of wine and surf	1	5	5	3	3	3	2	2	3	6	6	0	3	4	5	1	5	4	0	3	3	4	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	4	6	3	0	0	0	2	4	4	3	0	0	4	1	5	1	4	4	2	5	0	3	1	2	0			
7.2	Challenges	1	1	3	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	4	2	6	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	3	0	1	1	1	4	0	1	0			
7.3	Sustainability initiatives	0	0	11	9	2	5	0	0	5	0	1	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	3	6	5	2	4	2	5	0	1	4	3	5	6	5	6	3	6	3	6	3	15	1			
7.3, 8.4, and 9.3	Grassroots organisations	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0		
8.3 and 9.2	Pull factors	2	1	3	3	4	1	2	1	1	2	5	0	1	1	3	3	5	1	2	2	1	1	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	2	2	4	1	3	1	2	1	1	3	4	4	1	2	2	4	2	1			
8.2 and 8.3	Sustainability perception	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1			
8.3 and 8.4	Tourism boom	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			
8.3 and 8.5	Relationship between tourism stakeholder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	3	4	2	0	1	1	3	2	1	1	0	0			
9.2	Pro-growth ideology (also frontier ideology)	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1			
9.2	Governance issues	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0			
9.2	Labour force (local, backpackers, and skilled)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1		
9.2	Perception of destination evolution	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.3	Sustainability ethos	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.3	Destination image and branding	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9.3	Visitors' environmental awareness	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.3	Eco-destination certification	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9.3	Intermediary actors	2	0	1	1	0	3	2	4	3	1	1	4	4	1	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	4	2	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8.4	COVID-19 impact	1	0	3	2	2	0	3	4	0	4	1	2	1	5	5	4	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	3	1	0	3	2	3	3	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	5	2	4	2	5	2	3	1	3	4					
8.4	Post COVID-19 pathways	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	4	2	1	1	2			

## Appendix 3: Documentary analysis

Title	Author	Year	News/Mag	Journal/Book	Instit. Report	Database	LGAs	Chapters	Sections
Local intelligence	NN	1848	Perth Gazette	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Geological report	Brown, H. Y. L.	1871	Inquirer and Commercial News	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
From Busselton to Augusta	NN	1885	Inquirer and Commercial News	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Letters to the editor	Brockman, F. L.	1893	Daily News (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1950)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Map of WA showing names and boundaries of Roads Board District in red	WA Department of Lands and Surveys	1898	-	-	WA Department of Lands and Surveys	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
The Margaret River caves	NN	1900	Northam Advertiser	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
The Yallingup Brook Caves	Erskine, E.	1900	West Australian	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Advertising	NN	1902	West Australian	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
The Margaret River caves - opinion of visitors	NN	1902	West Australian	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
Ledger	Caves Board	1910	-	-	Caves Board	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Advertising	NN	1911	Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
The Cyclopedia of WA	Battye, J. S.	1912	-	Cyclopedia Company by Hussey & Gillingham	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
The ladies' section	NN	1916	Sunday Times	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Westralia's wonderland	NN	1916	Truth	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
News and notes	NN	1916	Southern Times	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Roadmap of South-West portion of WA	Pether, H. J.	1919	-	-	Royal Automobil Club of WA	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Advertising	NN	1919	South-Western Times	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
The studebaker in the South-West	NN	1921	Bunbury Herald and Blackwood Express	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Through the South-West	NN	1923	Bunbury Herald and Blackwood Express	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
A new railway	NN	1925	West Australian	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Trip to WA	NN	1928	The Week	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Lake Cave, Yallingup Cave	National Library of Australia	1928	-	-	National Library of Australia	Trove (NLA)	AMR	6	6.2
Railway map of WA	WA Railways, tramways, and electricity supply & WA Tourist Bureau	1928	-	-	WA Railways, tramways, and electricity supply & WA Tourist Bureau	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Anglers all: a Sunday morning scene	NN	1929	Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Advertising	WA Government Railways	1929	South-Western Times	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
See WA first	NN	1930	Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Down on the farm	NN	1930	Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
News and notes	NN	1932	Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
The value of tourist traffic: WA's many attractions	NN	1932	The Daily News	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Holiday resorts	NN	1934	West Australian	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
Where to go for a WA holiday?	NN	1934	The Daily News	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Tourist Traffic is Great Potential Asset	NN	1934	Daily News (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1950)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Spend easier out of doors	NN	1936	Westralian Worker	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Happenings in the social round	NN	1936	The Daily News	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Busselton-Flinders Bay branch train service	NN	1938	Sunday Times	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Some Australian caves	Brady, E.J.	1939	Walkabout	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Holidays ahead	NN	1939	West Australian	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Western Australia's irrigation development	Pollard, James	1942	Walkabout	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Where marron lie	Clarke Rees, Coralie	1943	Walkabout	-	-	Trove (NLA)	AMR	6	6.2, 6.4
Lonely Leeuwin	Gravenail, D.	1946	West Australian	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Sky track record	Drake-Brockman, H.	1946	Walkabout	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
The Australian post-war economy: a study in economic administration	Copland, D.	1954	-	The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 20, pp.421-438	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire and report upon WLSLS in WA (No.6785/7/57)	Logan, L.A., Willmott, F.D., Jeffery, G.E.	1957	-	-	WA State Government	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Tourist Act	Government of WA	1959	-	-	Government of WA	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Great expectation in WA	Mac.Robertson Miller	1962	The Bulletin	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
National Parks and nature reserves in Western Australia	The WA subcommittee of the Australian Academy of Science committee on National Parks	1963	-	-	The Australian Academy of Science and The National Parks Board of WA	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
A history of the WLSLS	Barrett, A. R.	1965	-	WA Department of Agriculture Press	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Caves in the corner	Nicholls, Peter C.	1966	Walkabout	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
Tourist Act	Government of WA	1973	-	-	Government of WA	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Depression and recovery in WA, 1928-29 to 1938-39: a deviation from the norm	Snooks, G. D.	1973	-	Economic Record 49, pp.420-439	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.2
Advertising	NN	1974	Australian Women's Weekly (1933 - 1982)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
Advertising	NN	1974	Australian Women's Weekly (1933 - 1982)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2, 6.4
Keeping their cool justifies the optimism	Hanley, John	1982	The Bulletin	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
An unusual millionaire saves an orchestral tour	Hoad, Brian	1984	The Bulletin	-	-	Trove (NLA)	AMR	6	6.4

David Helfgott and London Philharmonic Orchestra at Leeuwin Estate	Stevenson, Kinder & Scott Corporate Photography	1985	-	-	-	Trove (NLA)	AMR	6	6.4
WINE'S RETURN TO EDEN	Perkin, Corrie	1986	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	AMR	6	6.4
R50 penalty for damage to cave	NN	1987	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Saving A forests & jobs	NN	1987	Tribune (Sydney, NSW : 1939 - 1991)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
FOR TROUBLE-FREE WINE TOURS TRY A MINIBUS AND ABSTAINER	ALAN DEAR	1988	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Proquest	AMR	6	6.4
Will pilgrimage from afar outlast Expo?	NN	1988	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park Management Plan	Frewer, P., Raven, T., Taylor, N., Cockman, B., Ranger, S., Batchelor, M., Orr, K.	1989	-	-	WA Department of Conservation and Land Management	Google	MRR	6	6.4
WA TOWN'S STRATEGY MAY RESTRICT TOURISM	LISA JANE O'NEIL	1991	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6	6.4
What occasion would warrant a '52 Grange'?	Macklin, Robert	1991	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Connoisseurs compliment local products - FOOD AND WINE	Foster, Michael	1992	The Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.4
The Australian wine industry	NN	1993	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Cattle-station routine is different now	Scoufield, Stephen	1993	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Advertising	NN	1994	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Advertising	NN	1995	Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
VINEYARD PROMISES PRIZE YIELD	NATALIE O'BRIEN	1996	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6	6.4
Approval sought for purchase of a winery	NN	1996	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.2
History of conservation reserves in the south-west of Western Australia	Rundle, G. E.	1996	-	Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia 79, p.225-240.	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
The river Down Under	Petkanas, Christopher; Rapp, Martin; Baldwin, Ian	1997	Travel & Leisure	-	-	Factiva	MRR	6	6.4
Caveworks centre to stimulate south-west tourism	Prosser, Geoffrey	1997	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.4
Media Statements	Government of WA	1998	-	-	Government of WA	Google	MRR	6	6.4
THE JUDGE	JOHN TOWNSEND, FRAN SPENCER	1998	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	6	6.4
Lure Of The Kimberley In Spotlight	Margot Lang	1998	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.2
Experts Urge Care In Wine Tourism Growth	Valma Ozich	1998	Countryman	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.2; 8.4
Corks Pop As Quarry Rejected	Michael Zekulich	1998	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	6	6.4
Holiday Urges Care In Planning	Rick Cowan	1998	Countryman	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6	6.4
Minister announces new appointees to Australian Tourist Commission Board.	Thomson, Andrew	1998	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.2
Labor's Small Business Policy to target regions.	Martin, Stephen	1998	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.2
Your Guide	Megan Anderson	1998	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.4
Guide To The Region	Natalie Carthew, Jennie Mannion	1999	Countryman	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.4
Marron Farm Combines With Tourism Venture	Natalie Carthew	1999	Countryman	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.4
They've Got Tourism Down To A Vine Art	Gareth Malpeli	1999	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.2
Boutique Hotel Takes Top Award	Mark Pownall	1999	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	6	6.4
Tourism Projects Boom Hits SW	Vittorio Rechichi	1999	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6	6.4
Vineyards turn the course of Margaret River	JOHN McLWRAITH	1999	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6	6.4
WA Wins Australian Tourism Awards	Yonnene Pearce	1999	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	6, 8	6.4; 8.2
More people imperative : immigration to Australia	Langfield, Michelle	1999	-	-	National Archives of Australia	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.4
Tourism and recreation in the forests of south-western Australia	Sanders, Dale	1999	-	Chapter in Australia's Ever-Changing Forests, Conference Proceedings of the National Conferences on Australian Forest History.	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6, 8, 9	6.2; 6.4; 8.4; 9.2
Regional tourism beyond 2000	Hockey, Joe	2000	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Depression 1930s	Library and information service of WA (LISWA)	2000	-	-	Library and information service of WA (LISWA)	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Holiday towns in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Region: another Gold Coast?	Sanders, Dale	2000	-	Journal of Tourism Studies 11, pp.45-55	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6, 8	6.2; 6.4; 8.4
Landmark hotel on the market	Mark Drummond	2000	The Australian Financial	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	8	8.2
Oceanside Homes Plan Sparks Rally	Malcolm Quekett	2000	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	7, 8	7.2; 7.3; 8.4
Enjoy The Country Life	Amanda James	2000	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	8	8.2
\$2m Wine Tourism Conference Will Lure Visitors To Leeuwin	Michael Zekulich	2000	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
\$37m Sought For New Tax-plan SW Winery	Mark Pownall	2000	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Leeuwin To Host Big Wine Talks	Mark Pownall	2000	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Resort Plan Rides SW Boom	Paul Rylance	2000	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2

Gold Medal Disability Access Awards finalists	Newman, Jocelyn	2000	Parinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
2001 Census QuickStats: Augusta - Margaret River - Busselton	Australian Bureau of Statistics	2001	-	-	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Google	MRR	8	8.2
Secret of success	John Wright	2001	Courier Mail	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
SW Air Service To Close	Melissa Stevens	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Sign Blitz A Turn-off: Business	Steve Butler	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Coastal Homes Project Faces Planning Blow	Melissa Stevens	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 7.3; 8.4
Across the Nullarbor	NN	2001	Adelaide Advertiser	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.3
TV News: REGIONAL viewers may catch the holiday bug	SUE YEAP	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Margaret River on map	NN	2001	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
More than just position	JOHN KENNEDY	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Tuck into wine in the forest	MARGOT LANG	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
\$40 million in funding for universities.	Kemp, David	2001	Parinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Blind prawn emerges from low water mark	JERRY PRATLEY	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
BON VOYAGE	NN	2001	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Green tourism retreats start paying their way	Lydia Bell	2001	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Leaving is the hardest part	AMANDA JAMES	2001	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Farmers back tourism curbs	PETER TROTT	2002	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Winemakers squeezed in SW crush	Nicolette Casella	2002	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Tasty stopover	NN	2002	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Dreams, Propaganda and Harsh Realities: Landscapes of group settlement in the forest districts of Western Australia in the 1920s	Brayshay, M.; Selwood, J.	2002	-	Landscape Research 27, pp.81-101	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
August vision on tourism	STEPHEN SCOURFIELD	2002	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Hotel eyes Margaret River site	ELICIA KENNEDY	2002	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Hideaways for hedonists	ANGELA WELLINGTON	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Council snubs tourism body	ELOISE DORTCH	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2; 8.4
Martin Black	Staff Reporters	2003	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Culture revived for tourists' pleasure	CHARLIE WILSON-CLARK	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.4; 9.3
Surf gig faces wipeout	ELOISE DORTCH	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
The Light of Leeuwin: The Augusta-Margaret River shire history	Cresswell, G. J.	2003	-	The AMR History Group, WA	-	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4;
The Ideal Health and Holiday Resort: An Investigation into the Development of the Caves Area at Yallingup, Western Australia as a tourist destination	Summers, L.	2003	-	Chapter in Under Way 2003. Presented at the 24th Biennial Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation, Australian Speleological Federation Incorporated, Bunbury, WA.	-	Google Scholar	Busseton	6	6.2; 6.4
Vines bonus for lakeside house lots	CATIE LOW	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Bungalow bliss	GRIFFIN LONGLEY	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Southern comfort	MELANIE ANDERSON	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Regional events funding boost	NN	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Olio Bello breaks new ground in SW	NN	2003	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Book Easy makes for a more pleasant visit	NN	2003	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Resort aimed at Perth tourists [] Bunker Bay's hidden oasis of luxury in the Margaret River wine...	ANDREW GREGORY	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Cosy colonial comfort	MARGOT LANG	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2; 8.4
Still a Merri bush idyll	MARGOT LANG	2003	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Leeuwin's wine and music bonus	MICHAEL ZEKULICH	2004	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Wine Tourism Conference	NN	2004	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism boom in wine areas	MICHAEL ZEKULICH	2004	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Small wineries proving worth	Julie-anne Sprague	2004	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Challenges of wine growth	Jim Hawtin	2004	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Speech to the Transport and Tourism Industry Leaders' summit: Canberra: 4 August 2004.	Anderson, John	2004	Parinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Minister laps up the luxury	STEVE BUTLER	2004	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
PLACES IN THE HEART	Susan Kurosawa	2004	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Environmental History in Australasia	Robin, L.; Griffiths, T.	2004	-	Environment and History 10, pp.439-474	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
Wine Tourism and Regional Development: A Case Study of the Margaret River Region, Western Australia	Sanders, Dale	2004	-	Chapter in Proceedings of the International Wine Tourism Conference. Presented at the International Wine Tourism Conference	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
An Economic History Of Western Australia Since Colonial Settlement	WA Department of Treasury and Finance	2004	-	-	WA Department of Treasury and Finance	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Another \$2.36 million boost to dairy communities.	Truss, Warren	2004	Parinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Tug-of-war over Gnarabup Beach	REBECCA ROSE	2004	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	7	7.2
Xanadu Wines Ltd - 9-Feb-05	NN	2005	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2

MOON GLOW: The world's leading travel magazine, Conde Nast Traveller, has...	NN	2005	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Fremantle declared top of national tourist map TOP 10 "MUST SEE" TOWNS TOP 10 "DRIVE THROUGH" TOWNS	GARETH PARKER	2005	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Retailers bank on SW boom	NN	2005	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Berry Farm owners to collect fruits of their work	LEE-ANNE PETCHELL	2005	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Almost \$1M for seven tourism development projects	Bailey, Fran	2005	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Working holiday maker visa - Meeting the needs of growers in Western Australia	Vanstone, Amanda	2005	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
New winery owners aim to restore the Lagan vision	Mark Mentiplay	2005	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Margaret River in ring road wrestle	SUELLEN JERRARD	2005	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
BOOKING TRIAL A SW SUCCESS	NN	2006	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
WA to host international adventure extravaganza	NN	2006	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River stalwarts to sell hideaway	AINSLIE CHANDLER	2006	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
CALM fire to hit cave tours for months	SARAH ROBERTS, CHRISTIANA JONES	2006	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	7	7.2
Lifestyle and income in one package Good move to Margaret River Chance to preserve early history	JOSEPHINE ALLISON, JUSTINA KHAW	2006	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Locals blow a fuse at weekly power cuts	SUELLEN JERRARD	2006	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
The Drinkabout	Perrottet, Tony	2006	Outside	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Ambitious Lib denies threat talks	Alana Buckley-Carr	2006	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	7	7.2
Minister 'took developer's cash'	Alana Buckley-Carr	2006	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	Busseton	7, 8	7.2; 8.2; 8.4
Strategic planning for a regional wine festival: the Margaret River wine region festival	Carlsen, J., Getz, D.	2006	-	-	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
From colonial outpost to popular tourism destination: an historical geography of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Region 1829-2005	Sanders, Dale	2006	-	-	PhD. Thesis (Murdoch University)	Google Scholar	MRR	6, 8, 9	6.2; 6.4; 8.4; 9.2; 9.3
Coalition snares lion's share of tourism cash	Lisa Allen	2007	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Big players moving in	Julie-anne Sprague	2007	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
South West icon soaks it up	Julie-anne Sprague	2007	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
TOP WINE REGION	DAILE PEPPER	2007	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Karma expands	Jenelle Carter	2007	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
New tourism campaign delivering results in WA.	Bailey, Fran	2007	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
SHORTCUTS	NN	2007	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Margaret River may get international airport	SUELLEN JERRARD	2007	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Pods at Clairault	Julie-anne Sprague	2007	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2; 9.3
New South West tourism alliance	Janelle Macri	2008	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 9.2
TRY ME A RIVER	NN	2008	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Business Class: Tourist numbers up at Margaret River	Janelle Macri	2008	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
TOURIST GEM	LINDA ARCHDEACON	2008	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
THE LIGHTER NOTE	NN	2008	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Sunny Margaret River region strives to be icy paradise	SUELLEN JERRARD	2008	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	7, 9	7.2; 9.2
Tourism sector takes a hit	Janelle Macri	2008	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
WA's South West may host new airport	NN	2008	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
WANDER THE WILDFLOWERS	NN	2008	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	7	7.2
Travel	Stephen Scourfield	2008	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.3
Margaret River targets Perth	STEPHEN SCOURFIELD	2008	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Bus it down south	NN	2008	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	AMR	7, 8	7.2; 7.3; 8.2
HOW TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THE AFTERMATH OF CLIMATE CHANGE	Rachel Lebihan	2008	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.4; 9.2; 9.3
Southern land of milk and honey	NN	2008	The Countryman	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Tourism gala	NN	2008	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Acting Prime Minister Julia Gillard Joint Press Conference with Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson Melbourne	Rudd, Kevin	2008	PM Transcripts	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2+
Culinary ambassadors deserve their taste of success	MICHELE ROWE	2009	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
A trip into the unknown	Russell Quinn	2009	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Interstate airports for South West	NN	2009	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Rudd Government delivers \$5.7 million to build community infrastructure in regional Western Australia.	Albanese, Anthony	2009	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2
Stealing the awards show	STEPHEN SCOURFIELD	2009	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
SW campaign for small business	NN	2009	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Artists on the move	NN	2009	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2

SW tourism drive heads to an udder world	GEORGIA LONEY	2009	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret magic	SAURINE, ANGELA	2009	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Silver Vines just right for retirees	ROSS HAIG	2009	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
TOURISM WA chief executive Richard Muirhead says the road will provide a...	NN	2009	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Wineries pour on the service	Russell Quinn	2009	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
WA highway gets polities up and running	Andrew Burrell	2009	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
2009 WA Tourism Awards	NN	2009	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
WA lighthouse man wins tourism award	NN	2009	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Back-to-back   tourism bouquets	Anonymous	2009	Southern Gazette	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
Sandalford uncorks big new plans	Anonymous	2009	Midland Kalamunda Reporter	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
Influx of foreign cash forecast	VIVIENNE RYAN	2009	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism in SW hit by cheap Asian getaways	GEORGIA LONEY	2009	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 8.4; 9.2
What have we learnt? The Great Depression in Australia from the perspective of today	Gruen, D.; Clark, C.	2009	-	-	Australian Treasury Department	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Margaret Magic	Saurine, Angela	2009	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Setting the scene: cave management in the Leeuwin Naturaliste - an accident of history	Wood, A.	2009	-	-	Presentation at the Cave and Karst Management in Australasia	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Vasse Felix winery development	Whyte, M.	2009	-	-	Chapter in Wine Tourism Around the World	Google Scholar	AMR	6	6.4
Files inundate WA tourist mecca	Bain, DI	2010	ABC Radio	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2
Royalties for friesian art labelled load of bull	TREVOR PADDENBURG	2010	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.3
Fresh Busselton airport push	Russell Quinn	2010	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	Busselton	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.2; 9.2
Tourism grant brings art show to Margaret River	Ferguson, Martin	2010	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Funding for community infrastructure in WA's South West	Albanese, Anthony	2010	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2
Denmark's laid-back charm is big winner	GEORGIA LONEY	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Fremantle 'in need of a facelift'	GEORGIA LONEY	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	7	7.2; 7.3
Service with a frown	PADDENBURG, TREVOR	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
New CEO for Augusta- Margaret River	NN	2010	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	AMR	7	7.3
Australian greens call on government to abandon Margaret River oil field exploration	Siewert, Sen Rachel	2010	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Australian Greens denounce Margaret River oil and gas exploration.	Siewert, Sen Rachel	2010	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
SW cuts holiday prices	PADDENBURG, TREVOR	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
New SW landing pad	BRAD ELBOROUGH	2010	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Need for caution on South-West oil exploration leases	NN	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	9	9.3
ECO DOWN SOUTH	NN	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.3
Cow display goes under hammer	NN	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
A foodie's quest: DESTINATION WESTERN AUSTRALIA	Carli Ratcliff	2010	Sydney Morning Herald	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Mad cow mayhem	PADDENBURG, TREVOR	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Concern over Vasse coal bid	NN	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 7.3; 9.3
Strict curbs on coal proposal: Barnett	GEORGIA LONEY, GARETH PARKER	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
March to ban mine	TREVOR PADDENBURG	2010	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Plea to Barnett over coal mine	NN	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Buswell pushes ban on new SW coal mine	GEORGIA LONEY	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Bauxite mine threat to SW beauty	NN	2010	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Opposition to mine solid	NN	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Carles warns of more mines in wine region	DANIEL EMERSON	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Company makes case for Margaret River coal mine	Weber, David	2010	ABC Radio	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Oprah audience discovers Rottnest Island and Margaret River	Ferguson, Martin	2010	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
\$1m mine fight fund	PADDENBURG, TREVOR	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Residents join fight to block mine	Anonymous	2010	Western Suburbs Weekly	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
'Coral Coast' towns gear up for tourism bonanza	KENT ACOTT ANALYSIS	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
As the biggest name in US television announces she will visit Australia, the battle to have her come to our state begins We would welcome Oprah with open arms	Leo, Jessica	2010	The Advertiser	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Town forgotten in tourist boom	KIM MACDONALD	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Film man hits mine	Paddeburg, Trevor	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Chef turns up the heat	Paddeburg, Trevor	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism grants and long term strategy funding extended	Ferguson, Martin	2010	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River anger as wineries get rates deal	GEORGIA LONEY	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 7.3; 8.2

Surf's up for movie	Paddenburg, Trevor	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Resort plan off	Quinn, Russell	2010	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River tavern denied longer trading	KENT ACOTT	2010	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	AMR	8	8.2
Augusta to Busseton Trails Network Concept Plan	Ecoscape	2010	-	-	National Trust of WA	Google	MRR	6	6.2
Australia's South-West tourism development priorities	Tourism WA	2010	-	-	Tourism WA	Google	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 7.3; 9.2
The governance of coastal tourism: unravelling the layers of complexity at Smiths Beach, Western Australia	Wesley, A.; Pforr, C.	2010	-	-	Journal of Sustainable Tourism 18, pp.773-792	Google Scholar	Busseton	6, 7, 8	6.4; 7.2; 8.4
THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE MARGARET RIVER WINE REGION: developing adaptation and response strategies for the tourism industry	Jones, R., Wardell-Johnson, A., Gibberd, M., Pilgrim, A., Wardell-Johnson, G., Galbreath, J., Bizjak, S., Ward, D., Benjamin, K., Carlsen, J.	2010	-	-	CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd.	Google	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
Jewel Cave gets a polish	Anonymous	2011	Southern Gazette	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
SW BUCKETS BALI	Trevor Paddenburg	2011	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
MP ignites coal fury	Trevor Paddenburg	2011	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.4
EPA assesses Margaret River coal mine plan	Weber, David	2011	ABC Radio	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.4
SW mine objectors dig deep	Trevor Paddenburg	2011	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Willy Wonkas feast on chocolate success	Carolyn Herbert	2011	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Foraging for future of tourism	NN	2011	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Freebie lure for surf star	Paddenburg, Trevor	2011	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Gourmet trail plan tabled	Strachan, Julieanne	2011	The Canberra Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism slap for Bunbury	Laura Tomlinson	2011	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Investors home in on Bail	Emily Morgan	2011	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
WSJ(7/27) Mines And Vines Clash In Australia	NN	2011	Dow Jones Institutional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Six centres battle for top tourism award	NN	2011	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
South West in top seven of national regional tourism	Gill, Mal	2011	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Speech to the Peel Regional Development Australia Committee Carbon Forum	Crean, Simon	2011	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.4
Australians get involved in domestic holiday push	Ferguson, Martin	2011	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Surprise tourist accommodation figures show we're looking good	Nelson, Tom	2011	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River top	Georgia Loney	2011	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Big night for State's hot spots	NN	2011	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Sandalford's concert series worth \$24m to region	Nelson, Tom	2011	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
No way home as blaze jumps containment lines	DEBBIE GUEST	2011	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Fires scorch wine region	BENNETT, CORTLAN	2011	The Advertiser	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Open for tourism	Brad Elborough	2011	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Parlinfo - Bishop and Marino inspect bushfire damage in Margaret River	Bishop, Julie	2011	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Row over bush homes reignites	Paige Taylor; Nicolas Perpitch	2011	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Waterfronts are the way forward for Bunbury: Lamont	Miller, Shanelle	2011	Bunbury Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River bids to retain tourists	DANIEL EMERSON	2011	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Tourists urged to come on down	Haidee Vandenberghe with AAP	2011	The Countryman	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Town voted nation's top for tourism	KENT ACOTT	2011	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
WA government rejects Margaret River coal	AAP and staff reporters	2011	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.3
Supply-side evolution of caravanning in Australia: an historical analysis of caravan manufacturing and caravan parks	Caldicott, R. W.	2011	-	-	PhD Thesis (Southern Cross University)	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
Margaret River back on holiday menu	GEORGIA LONEY	2012	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Blaze of publicity	Elborough, Brad	2012	The Sunday Times	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Journey starts at home	NN	2012	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Government tips in \$250,000 to help tourism	Beacham, Janine	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Mine protection calls continue	Beacham, Janine	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.3
travel Fires hurt WA tourism	NN	2012	Townsville Bulletin	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
New ads a boon after bushfires	ELBOROUGH, BRAD	2012	The Sunday Times	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
SuperTowns funding: perimeter road, town centre top priority?	Beacham, Janine	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Drive to lure visitors back to prime spot	Barras, Tony	2012	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Margaret River festival	NN	2012	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Single brand proposed for wine region	NN	2012	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.2
Tableland tour trailblazers	Nick	2012	The Cairns Post	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Moving to... Margaret river	Effe mann	2012	The Sydney Morning Herald	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2

Cullen leads local push to stop offshore drilling	Staff reporter	2012	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Chef angry over snub for locals	Kent Acott	2012	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Margs gourmet event to build brand, tourism	Emily Morgan	2012	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	9	9.2
Gourmet showcase for Margaret River region	NN	2012	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Gourmet Escape festival to be an international drawcard	NN	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Shire seeks mining termination	NN	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Tourism icons bad for heart	NN	2012	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Value of a beach	Georgia Loney	2012	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Campaign to lure tourists back	Georgia Loney	2012	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Western Australia To Block Coal Mining In Wine Growing Region	NN	2012	Dow Jones Institutional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Council welcomes change of heart	NN	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Coal ban protects tourism region	Georgia Loney, Peter Kerr	2012	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Group calls on Redman to back wider mine ban	Gill, Mal	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Minister rules out wider South West mining ban	Peter Kerr	2012	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Town entry plan combines hub and history	Gill, Mal	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Anti-mining lobby puts Minister in spotlight	Gill, Mal	2012	Farm Weekly	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Historical society votes down wine centre proposal	Gill, Mal	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Let's not go to water over coalmines and gas fracking	NN	2012	The Sydney Morning Herald	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Burke long gone but battle still rages	NICOLAS PERPITCH, PAIGE TAYLOR	2012	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Gourmet town declares war on fast food	NICOLAS PERPITCH	2012	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 7.3; 9.2
Biodiversity hotspots in the southwest region of Western Australia	NN	2012	ABC Radio National	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Heston Blumenthal pulls out of Gourmet Escape for Margaret River	NN	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River tourism industry is still struggling to recover	Trenwith, Courtney	2012	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Bookings show wine and mining on the up	Allen, Lisa	2012	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
The economic and social contribution of migrants to Western Australia	Office of Multicultural Interests	2012	-	-	WA Department of Local Government	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Shire of Augusta Margaret River heritage inventory	Shire of AMR	2012	-	-	Shire of AMR	Google	AMR	6	6.4
WORD ON THE STREET	GREG THOMSON	2013	Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Giant swells make tourism waves	Rebecca Trigger	2013	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Airport name is endorsed	NN	2013	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
New owners for Wharmcliffe camp site	NN	2013	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
SW quarry plan sparks tourism fears	Kate Bastians	2013	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.3
Film likely to draw wave of SW tourists	NN	2013	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Surfing event boosts local exposure	NN	2013	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Promoting Australia's best winery experiences	Farrel, Don	2013	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
A bay for play	Elborough, Brad	2013	The Sunday Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
100 years of Margaret River: Timeline	NN	2013	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	6	6.2
Banyan Tree docks in Margaret River - EXCLUSIVE -	Allen, Lisa	2013	Weekend Australian	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
Tour of duty to the east calls: Megan Mackander meets Simon Ambrose, the new CEO of Sunshine Coast Destination Limited	NN	2013	Sunshine Coast Daily	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Have a say in town's future	DuCat, Clive	2013	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.3
Margaret River wine tours a finalist in 2013 tourism awards	Powell, Sandy	2013	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Regional hoteliers demand IR changes	Larry Schlesinger	2013	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
SW virtually unprotected by alerts	Angela Pownall, Tayissa Barone	2013	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Great white worry	ROBBO	2013	Geelong Advertiser	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Margaret River film, Drift, makes waves on silver screen	Gallo, L.-M.; Carrier, T.	2013	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.2
100 Years of Margaret River: Family set the scene for growth	NN	2013	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	6	6.2
100 Years of Margaret River: Hotel stands test of time	NN	2013	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	6	6.2
Australia to Launch Great White Shark Hunt	NN	2014	Dow Jones Institutional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Popularity comes at a price for iconic region	Shanna Crispin	2014	WA Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2; 8.4



More facilities at Mill	NN	2014	The Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.3
Combi Coffee is on point	Powell, Sandy	2014	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Food a way to hearts of tourists	Kate Emery	2014	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Margaret River tourism wiz wins young professional award	Tannock, Kellie	2014	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
THE STARS AND THE MOON: DESTINATION   MARGARET RIVER   33.9454° S, 115.0741° E	Rollason, Adam	2014	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
WA Acting Tourism Minister admits he's fearful of south-west sharks	Vidot, Anna	2014	ABC Radio National	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2
London gets a taste of the best from the West	Kent Acott	2014	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.3
Nat sparkles down south	NN	2014	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
State government invests in tourism event	Carrie Burns	2014	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Southwest housing needs	Brennan, M.	2014	-	-	Department of Housing - South West development commission	Google	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Climate Change Response: Evidence from the Margaret River Wine Region of Australia	Galbreath, J.	2014	-	Business Strategy and the Environment 23, pp.89-104	-	Google Scholar	MRR	7	7.2
Margaret River and Busselton tourism brands merge	NN	2014	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.2
Leeuwin's accidental concert turns 30	Caccetta, W.	2014	Perth Now	-	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
New tourism brand for Busselton region	Bickerton, Jemillah	2014	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.2
Surfing Down South. Margaret River press	Lyn, S., Moyle, A	2014	-	Margaret River Press	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Exception to a tourist curse	JOHN LETHLEAN, THE BILL	2015	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 7.3; 9.3
Margaret River council backs conservation effort for Mowen Forest	Panda, Anthony	2015	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Water Forever: South West	Water Corporation	2015	-	-	Water Corporation	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Cave tops romance register	TREVOR PADDENBURG	2015	The Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Sisters are doing it for themselves in Margaret River	Mckie, Amy	2015	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Western Australia wants to lure more Chinese tourists	NN	2015	Shanghai Daily	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Winery tour firm toast of travel trade	Kent Acott	2015	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Free Wi-Fi for town centre	Shand, Matt	2015	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
Good oil on the Margaret River	Woodburn, Rob	2015	Weekend Australian	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Smith-Gander set for tourism role	LISA ALLEN, APPOINTMENTS	2015	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.3
South West food sling in Singapore	NN	2015	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Visa, Tourism Australia in Asian tourist push	Jamie Freed	2015	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Tourism's China coup	KARA VICKERY	2015	The Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Margaret River got down to business   Photos	NN	2015	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
In reality, China's a big deal for Margaret River	Libby Mettam	2015	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Official name launched for Busselton Airport	NN	2015	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Renamed airport to reflect Busso's tourism focus	Matt Mckenzie	2015	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Godfather of food launches Gourmet Escape	Leask, Gemma	2015	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Indonesian tourism can bring two nations closer	Ross Taylor	2015	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Early days on Yallingup Hill	King, J.	2015	Surfing Down South (website)	-	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
A new era	MRBTA	2015	-	-	MRBTA	Google	MRR	7, 8	7.3; 8.2
Rural settlement schemes in the South West of Western Australia and Roraima State, Brazil: Unsustainable rural systems?	Jones, R., Alves Diniz, A., Selwood, J., Brayshay, M., Lacerda, E.	2015	-	Carpathian journal of earth and environmental sciences 10, pp. 125-132	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6, 9	6.4; 9.2
Snapshot: 30 years of the Margaret River Pro	NN	2015	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Tourism in agricultural regions in Australia: developing experiences from agricultural resources	Thompson, M.	2015	-	PhD Thesis (James Cook University)	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
Your Margaret River region	Block	2015	Block (website)	-	-	Google	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.2; 8.4; 9.2; 9.3
Tourism dollar key to south-west WA after bushfires wreak havoc	Ingram, Tess	2016	The Australian Financial Review	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Food, Wine and China coming to Margaret River	NN	2016	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.2; 8.4; 9.2
Surprise landing in Busselton	Kirk, Emma	2016	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Chinese skip cities for the sun: Tourism	Freed, Jamie	2016	The Age	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.2; 9.2
NEW PLACES TO DINE	BRAD ELBOROUGH	2016	The Sunday Times (Perth)	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Lighthouse projects get green light	Lefebvre, Nicky	2016	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2

Save Mowen Forest - Forest gathering	Rastrick, David	2016	-	-	-	Youtube	MRR	7	7.3
Is agri-tourism the future?	Butterworth, Kelly	2016	Queensland Country Life	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 8.4; 9.2
Cash boost for CinefestOZ	Dylan Caporn	2016	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 8.4; 9.2
The Margaret River Gourmet Escape was last week awarded Best. [Derived Headline]	NN	2016	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Gourmet tourism fertilized	Jennifer Crawley	2016	Hobart Mercury	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Tourism sponsorships stay secret	Mark Beyer	2016	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Margaret River winery director Vanya Cullen concerned about co-existing with gas industry: The managing director of one of Margaret River's leading wineries speaks out against the gas industry, expressing doubts the two sectors can co-exist in the region.	Laschon, Eliza	2016	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 7.3; 8.2; 8.4; 9.3
Broadbrush	Rob Broadfield	2016	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
WA hopes to double Chinese tourists by 2020	Nichols, Claire	2016	ABC Radio National	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
. Doc & Carol McDermott – Living in Smiths Valley since the 70s	King, J.	2016	Surfing Down South (website)	-	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Three generations of surfing nomads	McDonald-Lee, T.	2016	Horizons (June/July)	-	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
City of Busseton Economic Development Strategy 2016-2026	City of Busseton	2016	-	-	City of Busseton	Google	Busseton	7	7.2; 7.3
Nature based tourism in Australia	Ecotourism Australia	2016	-	-	Ecotourism Australia	Google	MRR	7, 8	7.3; 8.2
Moonlit roos a tourism hit	Claire Tyrrell	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Seaplane day tours to Margaret River	NN	2017	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Australia : New tourism offering takes flight over WA skies	NN	2017	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
South West seaplane tours	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Australia : Busseton-Margaret River set for take-off	NN	2017	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Airport upgrades "game-changer" for South West	Ivy, James	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Region up for tourism award	NN	2017	Caboorture Shire Herald	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
A CLOUD of uncertainty hangs over the heads of wine...[Derived Headline]	NN	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Airport to open adventures, exports	Dan Wilkie	2017	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Study finds waves of Margaret River drive economic growth: Got a break at your local beach? New research reveals it could not only provide the ultimate ride, but also drive economic growth	NN	2017	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Tide turns against WA surf event	Daniel Mercer	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2; 8.4
Region to fill with Easter vacationers	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
The old brand debate reignited	Kirk, Emma	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.2
A Busseton resident reignited the 'Margaret River region' versus 'this...' [Derived Headline]	NN	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	Busseton	9	9.2
Outback and beyond: MARGARET CARRAGHER ENJOYS SPLENDID ISOLATION ON A CAMPERVANING BREAK IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA	Carragher, Margaret	2017	Evening Chronicle	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Your voice	NN	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Tourism star rating	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism star	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Doubt over Busseton airport cash	Nick Butterly	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 8.2; 8.4
Taste of the nation	NN	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
SW food festival future in doubt	Warren Hately	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Cruise	Kirk, Emma	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
WA's humpback whale migration season begins	NN	2017	Mandurah Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Race on to join forces to lure tourists	Steve Butler	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Bunbury support remains for ships	Kirk, Emma;Hedley, Kate	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism provides more jobs	Lloyd, Gemma	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 7.3; 8.2; 9.2
Airport funding call this month	Kirk, Emma	2017	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.2; 8.4; 9.2
High taxes stifle growth in thriving wine tourism	Libby Mettam	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 9.2
Labor 'risks losing' big gourmet event for WA	Rob Broadfield	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2

Margaret River Pro set to return to World Surf League calendar: The World Surf League will return to Margaret River for at least the next two years after a deal was struck between the WA State Government and the World Surf League.	NN	2017	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
MR Pro	NN	2017	Bunbury Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River Pro confirmed for WSL Championship Tour	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River Pro set to continue	Jordanoff, Joe	2017	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Airports to help boost tourism	Kent Acott	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8,9	8.2; 9.2
Export boost for smaller vineyards	NEALES, SUE	2017	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Winery wandering on the rise for young Chinese	Sampson, Alex	2017	The Weekly Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Festival called off	Lloyd, Gemma	2017	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
New high for tourist numbers	NN	2017	Maitland Mercury	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Endangered white-bellied frogs saved by fake mud in successful breeding program: Researchers at Perth Zoo hope an artificial mud solution created to save a critically endangered frog from extinction could also help other threatened species.	De Poloni, Gian	2017	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
'Feel-good' events not big priority	Daniel Emerson	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8,9	8.2; 8.4; 9.2
Regional towns push for slice of lucrative business conference and events industry pie: Regional communities urge conference organisers to consider a different location for the \$30 billion business events sector.	NN	2017	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8,9	8.2; 9.2
Ecotours hot favourite at awards	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8,9	8.4; 9.3
Substantial Growth in Airbnb Supply and Demand in WA: New Report	NN	2017	Targeted News Service	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7,9	7.2; 9.2
Wonders will never cease for cave tour operator	Laurie, Victoria	2017	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Airbnb listings soar in WA as hotel industry cries foul over lack of regulation: A 50 per cent jump in Airbnb listings in Western Australia in the past year sparks criticism from the hotel industry that they are no longer competing on a level playing field.	NN	2017	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
WA: Calls for regulation amid WA Airbnb boom	NN	2017	AAP General News Wire	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7,9	7.2; 9.2
Battle against BP service station in WA town of Cowaramup reveals regional planning 'anarchy': A community fight over a new service station in the quaint WA town of Cowaramup shows how Australia's regional planning system has descended into 'anarchy', according to one senior planning expert.	Jeremy Story Carter for The Law Report	2017	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7,9	7.2; 7.3; 9.3
Impacts of Airbnb on the South West	Kirk, Emma	2017	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7,9	7.2; 9.2
Airbnb impacts for the region	Kirk, Emma	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7,9	7.2; 9.2
Southern food delights judges	Rob Broadfield	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
South West operators sweep 2017 WA Tourism Awards	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
One-stop shop plan to provide website for all tourist bookings in region	Fitzsimons, David	2017	Central Western Daily	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Australia : Perth welcomes more than 400 Australian tourism leaders	NN	2017	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Margaret River Gourmet Escape brings world's best to town   Photos	DAWSON, JEMILLAH;Kirk, Emma	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Reboot timely	Robert Broadfield	2017	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Gourmet Escape changes 'a step in the wrong direction' for South West	Kirk, Emma;Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
State cashes in on region	Kirk, Emma;Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Gourmet gouged	Kirk, Emma;Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
OCEAN'S THIRTEEN	Ewart, Paul	2017	The Advertiser	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
South West place to Stayz	Elliott, Sophie	2017	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River's Night Market has summer dining sorted	Lefebvre, Nicky	2017	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Community Strategic Plan 2036	Shire of AMR	2017	-	-	Shire of AMR	Google	AMR	7	7.2; 7.3

31 Stunning Photos of the Margaret River Region	The Margaret River region	2017	The Margaret River region (website)	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Nature based tourism strategy: nature, Aboriginal adventure	MRBTA	2017	-	-	MRBTA	Google	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 7.3; 8.2; 9.2; 9.3
The Way It Was: A History of the Early Days of the Margaret River Wine Industry	Forrestal, P., Jordan, R.	2017	-	Reah How You Want Limited	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Vasse Hotel	City of Busselton	2017	-	-	City of Busselton - State Heritage Office	Google	Busselton	6	6.2
Booking.com's 2017 Sustainable Travel Report	Booking.com	2017	Booking (website)	-	-	Google	Global	8	8.4
The Impact of Airbnb on WA's Tourism Industry	Phorr, C.; Volgger, M.; Coulson, K.	2017	-	-	Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Champagne keeps flowing at Vasse Felix after historic global wine gong	Prestipino, D.	2017	WA Today	-	-	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Coping with success: Managing overcrowding in tourism destinations	McKinsey & Company; World Travel & Tourism council	2017	-	-	McKinsey & Company; World Travel & Tourism council	Google	Global	8	8.4
River brand back on agenda	Kirk, Emma	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 8.4; 9.2
Transcript of interview Paula Kruger: ABC Perth: 31 January 2018: state of politics; Australia Day; WA infrastructure; GST; cabinet papers found;	Albanese, Anthony	2018	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Your voice	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.2
No support shown for Margaret River branding	Kirk, Emma	2018	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.2
Council endorse rebrand strategy	Kirk, Emma	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.2
Heritage efforts applauded	NN	2018	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Sandalford wins gold	Elliott, Sophie	2018	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
New Bunbury Geographe brand revealed	NN	2018	Bunbury Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Low carbon living: Blue Mountains scheme to go&#amp;#a0;national	NN	2018	Blue Mountains Gazette	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
New flights NEW SIGHTS: Travel [Eire Region]	NN	2018	The People	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism drop concerning	Elliott, Sophie	2018	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Transcript: Television interview: Sky News: 21 March 2018: dividend imputation; company tax; enterprise bargaining; inaugural Qantas Perth-London flight; tourism	Albanese, Anthony	2018	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Direct Qantas flight to London will drive tourism jobs growth	Albanese, Anthony	2018	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Wilyabrup Food, Wine Trail launched in style   Photos	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
tourism two year plan	NN	2018	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	Busselton	8	8.2
Tourism	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 7.3; 8.2
RAC acquires Wharmcliffe Mill Bush Retreat	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	7	7.3
Settlers Tavern named Australia's best licensed live music	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
Australia : Margaret River Pro showcases jewel in WAs crown	NN	2018	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Region's businesses ride wave of success thanks to the Margaret River Pro	NN	2018	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism ruining world	NN	2018	The Northern Star	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism costs must be addressed	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
WA: Sharks make WA 'dangerous' to the world	NN	2018	AAP General News Wire	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
South West leading family holiday destination	NN	2018	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Fears Margaret River Pro cancellation due to dual shark attacks could lead to tourism wipeout	NN	2018	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Margaret River Pro surfing event cancelled after shark attacks near Gracetown: Former world champion Gabriel Medina labels Margaret River the most dangerous place to surf in the world after the competition is cancelled amid safety fears following two nearby shark attacks.	NN	2018	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Shark victim wants money for research	Raphael, Angie	2018	AAP Bulletin Wire	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Surfer urges action on sharks	Rhianna Mitchell, Daniel Mercer	2018	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Australia to catch sharks after two attacks in a day [Eire Region]	Lagan, Bernard	2018	The Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3

Sharks stop the pros, but not the local lads	Burrell, Andrew	2018	The Australian	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Call for tough talks on sharks to save tourism	Kirk, Emma	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
WA shark mitigation strategy is well over due	Reynolds, Linda	2018	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2
In the teeth of a shark storm	Pawle, Fred	2018	Weekend Australian	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Boosting international wine tourism	Ruston, Anne	2018	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism group to acquire Forest Adventures South West	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Funding a coup for region	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Hundreds join South West safe shark group rally in Perth	NN	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Budget 2018: Investing in regional tourism	Ciobo, Steven	2018	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Busseton's ties to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex	Kirk, Emma	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Airport support debated by MPs	Elliott, Sophie	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
SWEET DREAM TIMES	Mitchell, Celeste	2018	The Advertiser	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Airfreight focus for Busseton Margaret River Airport	Kirk, Emma	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
FED: Chinese visitors boost tourism spending	NN	2018	AAP General News Wire	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Chinese underpin \$42bn tourist cash splash	Kelly, Joe	2018	The Australian	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Surf's up for the Margaret River Pro?	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 7.3; 8.2
Rick Wilson on shark	Dietsch, Jake	2018	The Esperance Express	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 8.2; 8.3; 9.2
\$1 million tourism campaign for Margaret River	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Council urged to reject wakeboard facility proposal	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	7	7.2; 7.3
Shark signal fail sparks drum call	Daniel Mercer	2018	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Multimillion dollar campaign to boost WA wine country	Ruston, Anne	2018	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.2
Tourist hotspot reels in face of Airbnb push	Kent Acott	2018	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2
Tourism woes not our fault: Airbnb	Kent Acott	2018	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 9.2
Chocolate among the vines	Taverner, Stuart	2018	Herald	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
MORE CHOOSE BACKYARD BREAKS	Mayoh, Lisa	2018	Sunday Telegraph	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Yallingup to host World Surf League Qualifying Series	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	Busseton	8	8.2
Cape to Cape MTB funded	NN	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Voyager targets tourists with provenance push	Cassandra Charlick	2018	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Main Roads moves to calm Caves Road concerns	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.3
New format for food festival	Rob Broadfield	2018	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River to share Gourmet Escape with Perth, Swan Valley	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 8.4; 9.2
Sirona tests tourism hot spot	Helen Shield	2018	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Festival expands	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
South West to share event	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Accommodation providers speaking out	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 9.2
Event expanded	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
\$30m 'slap in the face'	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Airport partnership 'slap in the face' for South West	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Interest in stalled airport	Gary Adshead	2018	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.4
State&#x0;undermining airport project	Kirk, Emma	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
letters to the editor	DAWSON, JEMILAH	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	7	7.2
Airport sabotage	Kirk, Emma	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2; 8.4
Airbnb numbers a worry	Kirk, Emma	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 9.2
Morris's secret of resorts success	Allen, Lisa	2018	The Australian	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Wild western beauty aims beyond grape expectations	Taylor, Paige	2018	Weekend Australian	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3

Tour promotes wine tourism	NN	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Airbnb regulation: there is a middle ground	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Margaret River to take off on tour	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
South West group 'instrumental' in short stay accommodation inquiry	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Nature, Food and Wine Draws Asian Visitors to Australia's South West	NN	2018	Targeted News Service	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Industry reacts to inquiry	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Key to SW tourism is in experiences	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Experiences top of&#x0;tourists' wish lists	NN	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Holiday home site launch	NN	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Stella Bella&#x0;Best in Show J&#x0;2018 Margaret River Wine Show	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Premium products and attractions at Margaret River	Cassandra Charlick	2018	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Temporary closure after cave collapse	Lefebvre, Nicky	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Region's operators win tourism gold	NN	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Busseton Margaret River Airport's national award	NN	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Award not enough to fund airport	Elliott, Sophie	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Flights from Asia would benefit	Kirk, Emma	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Australia - WA food and wine trails target growing tourism market	NN	2018	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Revived push for flights to Busseton	Kirk, Emma	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.2
Renewed flights push	Kirk, Emma	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 8.3
Stoush continues over airport funding	Kirk, Emma	2018	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 10	7.2; 8.4
Airport expansion 'just makes sense'	NN	2018	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 11	7.2; 8.5
Gourmet gambles for regional tourism	Cassandra Charlick	2018	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2
Caves Road: a short history of a winding way	Wilson, J.	2018	Earth Sea Star (website)	-	-	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Where Sustainable Travel is Headed in 2018	Booking.com	2018	Booking (website)	-	-	Google	Global	8	8.4
How to serve today's digital traveler	Dichter, A.	2018	-	-	McKinsey & Company	Google	Global	8	8.4
An in-depth look at China's outbound tourist market	Dichter, A., Chen, G., Saxon, S., Yu, J., Suo, P.	2018	-	-	McKinsey & Company	Google	Global	8	8.4
The world's most spellbinding wine region	Moore, V.	2018	The Telegraph	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.2
Two year action plan for nature-based tourism in Western Australia 2019 and 2020	DBCA	2018	-	-	WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation, and Attractions	Google	MRR	7, 8	7.3; 8.2
Brazilian pro surfer Gabriel Medina also raises concerns about safety of @MargiePro in light of twin shark attacks yesterday	Charlotte Hamlyn	2018	-	-	-	Instagram	MRR	7	7.2
With Beaches, Wine and Buzz, Is This Australia's Next Hot Place?	Rodell, Basha	2019	New York Times (Online)	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Mixed results for region's tourism operators over summer	Elliott, Sophie	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
remote part of 'down under' finds itself on map	NN	2019	The Star	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Lighthouse upgrades to draw 100,000 visitors	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Providers just want a&#x0;level&#x0;playing field	Elliott, Sophie	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.2
South West shores to be exposed to billions	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 8.4; 9.2
Airbnb plea for new-age rules	Nick Butterly	2019	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.2
Airbnb calls for regulations to be fixed	Elliott, Sophie	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.2
Upgrades deliver tourists	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.2
Skydivers leave for Rottneest	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Info centre closes	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
MLA probes state over airport delay	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4

Margaret River Pro secured until 2021	NN	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Pro surfers keen to return	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Grants to boost economy	NN	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
China film delegation tour	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Proposal for safer cycleway	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.3
Big picture for SW region	Sharp, Emily	2019	Bunbury Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Capes bike routes in sight	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
South West projects win big in economic grant series	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.2
A Busseton accommodation provider lets staff go as guest numbers&#amp;#x0;decline	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	Busseton	9	9.2
Australia : WA prepares to welcome the world to major tourism trade show	NN	2019	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Luxury listing: Cape Lodge on the market	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2
Time to focus our efforts here	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.2
Cape Naturaliste's Big Reveal Weeks Away	NN	2019	Targeted News Service	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Fancy a foodie escape	Levin, Sofia	2019	Newcastle Herald	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Australia : MasterChef deal has key ingredients to tempt tourists to WA	NN	2019	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Forrest votes: Nerilee Boshammer The Greens (WA)	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Catch all of the action at this year's Pro	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Australia : Regional WA secures million-dollar event funding	NN	2019	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Perfect conditions expected for the Pro	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Australia : WA welcomes worlds best surfers for Margaret River Pro	NN	2019	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Region 'critical' to tourism	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Busseton's tourism boom	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Family of royal honours	NN	2019	Joondalup Wanneroo Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Budget top up for airport marketing fund	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Whether we like it or not, Airbnb is coming	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Margaret River named top destination in Asia-Pacific	NN	2019	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Amazing places to explore in Western Australia, from the Kimberley Coast to Margaret River	NN	2019	Telegraph.co.uk	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
WESTERN AUSTRALIA PARTNERS WITH AIRASIA TO BOOST TOURISM	ZAINUDIN, ZAIRINA	2019	BERNAMA : Malaysian National News Agency	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
An idea to liven up centre of town	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Tourism group applauds announcement	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 7.3; 8.2
Margaret River region craft beer trail launched	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River region tops Lonely Planet travel list	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Region best of travel list	NN	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Craft beer guide launched	NN	2019	Busseton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	Busseton	8	8.2
Australia : Cruise partnership charts new waters for WA tourism	NN	2019	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Margaret River stars in Masterchef WA week	Lefebvre, Nicky	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Industry toasts launch of Cabin Fever winter festival	Lefebvre, Nicky	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.2; 9.2

River region awash with tourism gloom	Warren Hately	2019	Augusta-Margaret River Times	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Harder stand on short stay	Kirk, Emma	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.2
Disgraceful behaviour by club	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	Busselton	7	7.3
Shire pledges arts funding	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	AMR	8	8.2
Australia : New WA Gourmet Escape expands food festival to three locations	NN	2019	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Calls for Arum Lily action	BURTON, JESINTA	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Survey reveals concerns of business sector	BURTON, JESINTA	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2
New Curtin University-Based Tourism Observatory to Benefit Australia's South West	NN	2019	Targeted News Service	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Call for crack down on rapid increase of short-term rentals	Kirk, Emma	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.2
New Curtin-based tourism observatory to benefit Australia's South West	NN	2019	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Holiday home findings released	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Jetstar start Melbourne to Busselton Margaret River flights from \$75	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Calls for a crackdown on short stay	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Sustainable camping accommodates and educates tourists one cup of sawdust at a time	NN	2019	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	9	9.3
Tourism numbers are up in region	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Increased competition in tourism sector	Kirk, Emma	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Spike in numbers	Kirk, Emma	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Margaret River region bucks tourism trend	Kirk, Emma	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Speech to the Indonesia Australia Business Council Conference, Bali, Indonesia	King, Madeleine	2019	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.4
Awards gala honours best of Margaret River wine industry	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Australia pushing Asian tourists to venture out of major cities	Pearlman, Jonathan	2019	The Straits Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Tourism's best in the west	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Goalposts keep shifting on funding a terminal at the Busselton Margaret River Airport	Kirk, Emma	2019	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Malaysian delegation puts South West food on menu	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Showcasing Australia's credentials as a leading business events destination	Birmingham, Simon	2019	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.4
Hands-on history at new Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse centre	NN	2019	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Support for 'great' WA walk	Peter de Kruijff & Josh Zimmerman	2019	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 9	7.3; 9.2
Australia : Next wave of \$12 million marketing boost targets Europe	NN	2019	MENA Report	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Assessing the Environmental Characteristics of the Margaret River Wine Region, Australia: Potential New Geographical Indication Sub-Units	Lacorde, M.	2019	-	-	International Journal of Applied Geospatial Research 10, pp. 1-24	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
Unregulated Airbnb threatens to derail stable Margaret River growth, inquiry hears	Morris, M., Neuweiler, S.	2019	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association Annual Report 2018 - 2019	MRBTA	2019	-	-	MRBTA	Google	MRR	6, 8, 9	6.2; 6.4; 8.4; 9.2
Climate change, tourism and rural sustainability in the Margaret River wine region of Western Australia	Jones, R., Burke, G., Stocker, L.	2019	-	-	Chapter in Ethical and Responsible Tourism: Managing Sustainability in Local Tourism Destinations	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
Building healthy & productive ecosystems	South West Catchments Council Inc	2019	-	-	South West Catchments Council Inc	Google	MRR	7	7.3
UNESCO Global Geoparks	UNESCO	2019	-	-	UNESCO	Google	Global	7, 8	7.3; 8.4
Booking.com reveals key findings from its 2019 sustainable travel report	Booking.com	2019	Booking (website)	-	-	Google	Global	8	8.4
Bridgefield Monument	Shire of AMR	2019	-	-	Shire of AMR	Google	MRR	6	6.2
Lonely Planet's best places to visit in Asia Pacific for 2019	Street, F.	2019	CNN Wire Service	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Focus on luring more visitors to Coast	NN	2020	Advocate	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4

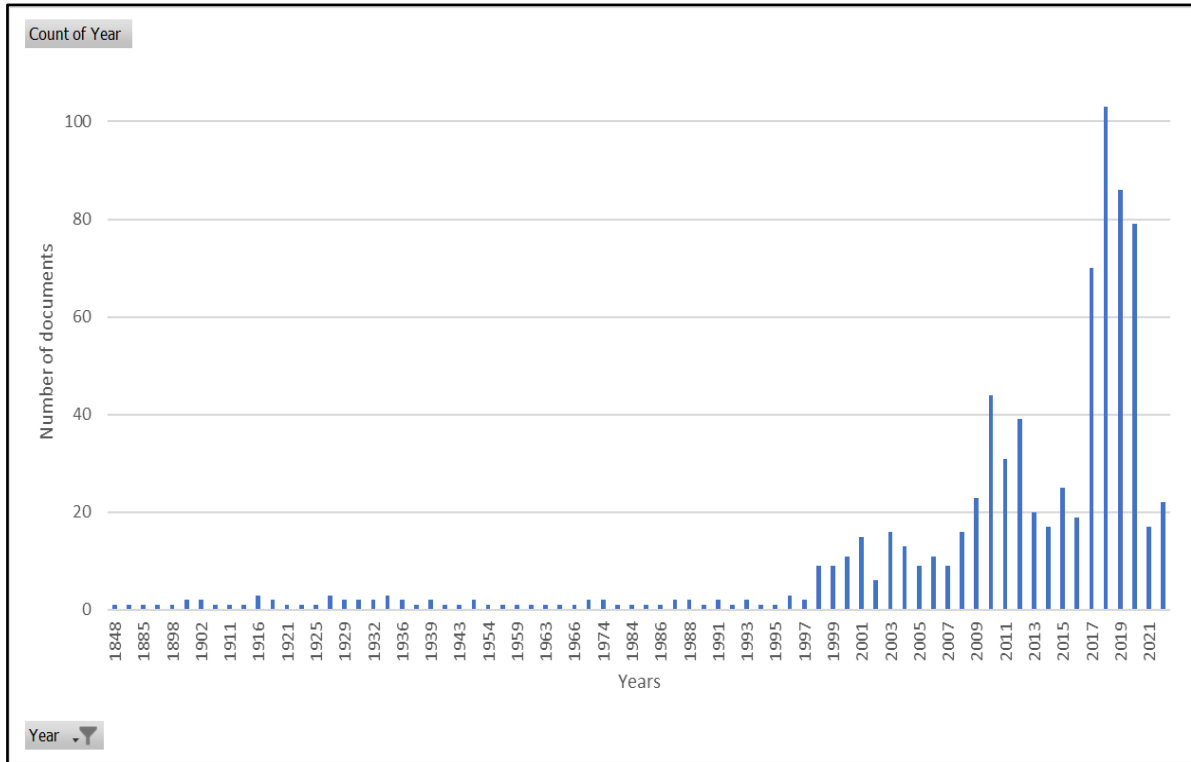


Jetstar flights announced	NN	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Trouble on the Track: Locals 'worried' by Cape to Cape concept	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Margaret River Wine region overview	Margaret River Wine Industry Association	2020	-	-	Margaret River Wine Industry Association	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Weather sees ship bypass Busselton	BURTON, JESINTA	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Transcript of interview with Josh Szeps and Kathryn Robinson: ABC Breakfast 19 January 2020: funding for tourism operators affected by the bushfires	Birmingham, Simon	2020	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2
Transcript of interview with Darren James, Nick McCallum and Heidi Murphy: 3AW Sunday Mornings: 19 January 2020: funding for tourism operators affected by the bushfires	Birmingham, Simon	2020	Parlinfo [Press release]	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	7	7.2
Don't cancel - blue skies will return Down Under	Beasley, Carolyn	2020	The Straits Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2
Fires fan tourism worries	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2
Tourism industry welcomes fire package	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2
Cruise ship stop cancelled for second time in two weeks	BURTON, JESINTA	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2
Go bush on holiday to help your fellow Aussies	NN	2020	The Daily Telegraph	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Bushfires affecting South West tourism	NN	2020	The Collie Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Review to evolve region's tourism brand	Kirk, Emma	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2
Region helps bushfire relief	NN	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
WA Government to implement short stay recommendations	Kirk, Emma	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Knitting nannas native forest campaigners	Bradley, Hazel	2020	The Senior	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Nature Conservation MRR	Nature Conservation MRR	2020	Nature Conservation MRR (website)	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Government to introduce registration	Kirk, Emma	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 9	7.2; 9.2; 9.3
Qantas and Jetstar Cut Flights in Response to Coronavirus	NN	2020	Contify Aviation News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Imbalance between tourism and ratepayers	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
World Surf League cancels all events in March	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Tourist attractions closed	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
A trip back in time to Caves House Hotel   Photos	Kirk, Emma	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	6	6.2
Region calls for some rate relief	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Margaret River to become hub for training surf lifesavers with WA's first training camp	NN	2020	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Tourist towns plead for help	Duke, Jennifer	2020	Sydney Morning Herald	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Increase in shark sightings	NN	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
Busselton Margaret River Airport transformed and ready for Jetstar flights	Kirk, Emma	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Walking tours back on track as sightseers return	NN	2020	The Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.4
Tourism operators desperate for state borders to re-open	Barbara, Miller	2020	ABC Radio	-	-	Trove (NLA)	MRR	8	8.4
Tourism operators preparing to adapt as coronavirus restrictions ease	Sinclair, Hannah	2020	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Wineries facing challenges as COVID-19 landscape evolves	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
States slow to reopen will miss tourists	Curtis, Katina	2020	AAP General News Wire	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Young adults living with their well-heeled parents are signing up to the dole in...	Josh Zimmerman	2020	The West Australian	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8	8.4
Tourism operators struck down	NN	2020	The Canberra Times	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Busselton-Margaret River Airport terminal shelved, funding set to be redirected to help with COVID-19 recovery	NN	2020	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Busselton Margaret River Airport terminal funding up in the air	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Virtual wine tasting allows Australian winemakers to reach international wine lovers despite coronavirus:	Hayes, Jessica	2020	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4

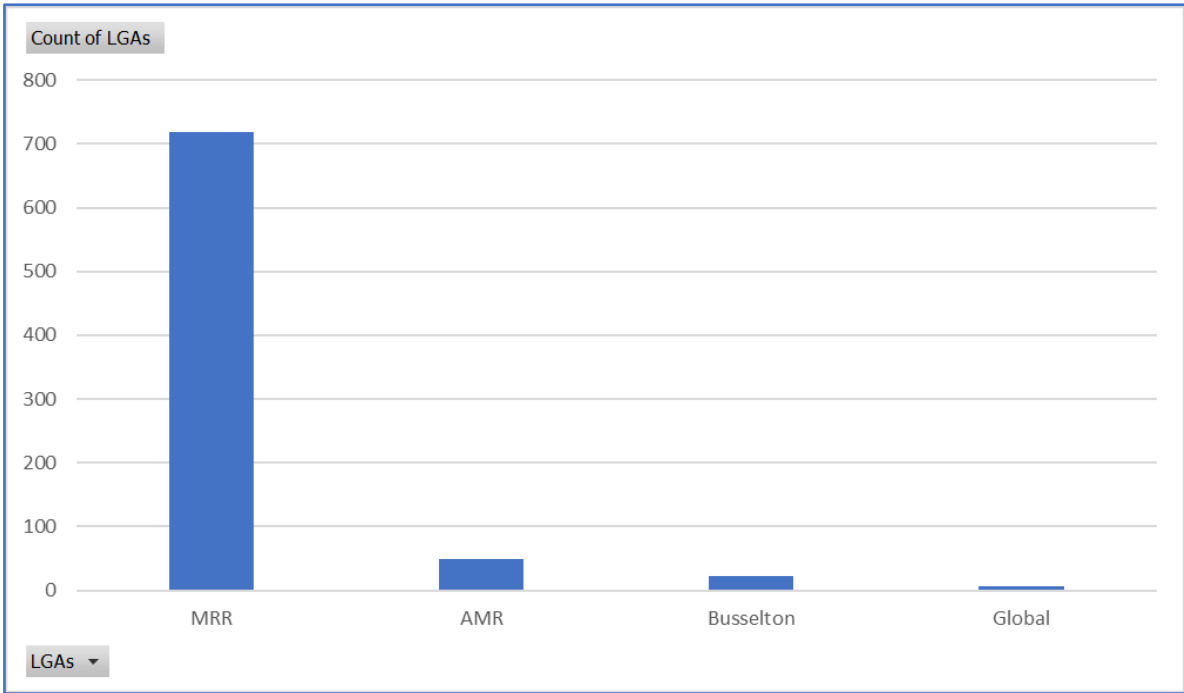
Marriott to operate new Margaret River spa and resort	Jordan Murray	2020	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.2; 7.3; 8.2; 8.4; 9.2
Margaret River to house first five-star resort on pristine beachfront location	Stephens, Kate	2020	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Five star location	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2; 9.3
'A scar on our landscape' - Concerns raised over hotel development on coast	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Saracen adds to flowing hotel project pipeline	Katie McDonald, Jordan Murray	2020	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2; 9.3
Push to halt 5-star resort	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8, 9	8.4; 9.2; 9.3
Resort plan a conversation starter	Cassandra Charlick	2020	Business News	-	-	Proquest	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Shaping the future of WA	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Transition Town MR	Transition Town MR	2020	-	-	Transition Town	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Perfect time to build the airport terminal	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Protecting our land for future generations	Preserve Gnarabup	2020	-	-	Preserve Gnarabup & Surfrider Foundation Australia	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Light shining on Cape Leeuwin heritage precinct	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2
Busselton and Margaret River rate high in COVID-19 financial impact analysis	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Five-star development at Gnarabup, Margaret River, sparks protest rally;	Panda, Anthony	2020	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.2
Crowds rally for Gnarabup coastal preservation   Photos	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
High proportion of businesses in Busselton and Margaret River reliant on JobKeeper	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Coastal review considered	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
A new appreciation for mental health   Mindful Margaret River	MINDFUL MARGARET RIVER	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
Tourism operators and the Government want to give you a 'kick up the bum' to rethink your holidays during coronavirus	Macmillan, Jade	2020	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Staffing shortage sparks tough times for businesses	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
Online booking platforms hiking up price of accommodation in the South West	Kirk, Emma	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Airport, tourism projects snubbed in WA Government's South West recovery plan	Kirk, Emma	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Video puts lighthearted spin on Main Street disruption	Lefebvre, Nicky	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7, 8	7.3; 8.2; 8.4
Ambitious proposal for Margaret River tourist hotspot known as 'Kodak Corner'	Panda, Anthony	2020	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	7	7.3
WA workers sent out yonder, but where will they live?	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Margaret River's main street upgrades: Calls for council concessions due to concerns over Christmas trade disruptions: Margaret River's main street is undergoing substantial change courtesy of a multi-million dollar makeover, but traders are nervous it may rob them of typically brisk Christmas trade.	Panda, Anthony	2020	ABC Regional News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Staff shortage threatens South West's hospitality industry	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Tourists encouraged to come 'down south' for school holidays	NN	2020	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
WA Gourmet Escape international food festival cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions	Loney, Georgia	2020	ABC Premium News	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Vouchers sell out online in record time	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Factiva	MRR	8	8.4
Save Smiths Beach Again	NN	2020	Save Smiths Beach Again (website)	-	-	Google	Busselton	7	7.2
Nine years on: Margaret River bushfires remembered	NN	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
\$5.5 billion WA Recovery Plan launched to get WA back on track	Government of WA	2020	-	-	Government of WA	Google	MRR	8	8.4
Big turnout at resort protest	Hately, W., Fletcher, C.	2020	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Antipodean Aftershocks: Group Settlement of Hebridean and non-Hebridean Britons in Western Australia following World War One	Jones, R.; Jones, T.	2020	-	Northern Scotland 11, pp. 188-203	-	Google Scholar	MRR	6	6.4
Margaret River council rejects environmental rezoning of \$70m Gnarabup hotel site	de Kruijff, P.	2020	WA Today	-	-	Google	AMR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
Premier reveals restaurants, regional borders to reopen	de Kruijff, P.	2020	The West Australian	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4

Coronavirus WA regional border restrictions to be lifted this Friday except for the Kimberley	Laschon, Eliza	2020	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4
WA housing market: Stimulus boost a "kick starter" for virus recovery	Cox, N.	2020	Real Estate.com.au (website)	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4
Tourism operators desperate for state borders to re-open	Barbara, M.	2020	ABC Radio	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4
Understanding and Managing the Impact of Airbnb: The Case of Western Australia from 2015 to the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020	Pfarr, C., Volgger, M., Cavalcanti Marques, S., Cahya Nusantara, A.	2021	-	Springer Singapore	-	Google Scholar	MRR	7	7.2
Get the Data	Inside Airbnb	2021	-	-	Inside Airbnb	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Heading to the South West's pristine beaches? Good luck getting a car park	Keenan, Z.	2021	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Yallingup New Year and Easter images by Colleen Burke	King, J.	2021	Surfing Down South (website)	-	-	Google	Busselton	6	6.4
2021 Census data	Australian Bureau of Statistics	2021	-	-	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Google	MRR	8	8.2
Top news in Augusta-Margaret River	NN	2021	Augusta Margaret River Times	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Perth developer puts forward new design for Smith's beach developer	Dawson, J.; Kirk, E.	2021	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Tourists flock to Margaret River in a record-breaking season	NN	2021	Curtin University News	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4
Yallingup Precinct Area, Caves, Caves House, Store, Hall, Power House and Farm	City of Busselton	2021	-	-	City of Busselton - State Heritage Office	Google	MRR	6	6.2
"I wouldn't wish this on anyone": The Augusta Margaret River housing crisis	Godden, N. J.	2021	-	-	Just Home Organisation	Google	MRR	7	7.2; 7.3
Housing crisis described as a "disaster"	Kirk, Emma	2021	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Logging of WA native forests to be banned under state budget plan unveiled by Mark McGowan	Shine, Rhiannon; Hayes, Jessica; Worthington, Jackson; Pancia, Anthony	2021	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.3
WA to end native forest logging   Premier Mark McGowan: This is a great thing to do	Kirk, Emma	2021	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	9	9.3
Seasonal work on Australia's farms: 'No one wants to do this sort of work.'	McGLone, T.	2021	The Guardian	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Western Australia to reopen border on 5 February after almost two years sealed off from the world	Towie, N.	2021	The Guardian	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4
Adelaide Airport: a brief overview of its history	Litten, A.; Grainger, G.	2021	-	-	West Torrens Historical Society Inc.	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Margaret River's beauty hides homeless disaster as property prices boom	Mangan, S.; Hyman, A.	2021	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
Free shuttles launched as Busselton locals call for tourist transport	Melville, B.	2022	Busselton - Dunsborough Mail	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Our Story	Breafley, M.	2022	-	-	Gralyn Estate	Google	AMR	6	6.4
WA border to open on March 3 as COVID tally set to peak at 10,000 cases a day	Carmody, J.; Weber, D.	2022	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4
Caves House group	City of Busselton	2022	-	-	City of Busselton - State Heritage Office	Google	Busselton	6	6.2; 6.4
Our Story	Credaro Family Estate	2022	-	-	Credaro Family Estate	Google	Busselton	6	6.4
ECO Destination Certification	Ecotourism Australia	2022	-	-	Ecotourism Australia	Google	MRR	7, 8, 9	7.3; 8.4; 9.3
In Margaret River, Western Australia	Earn Your Vino	2022	-	-	-	Facebook	MRR	8	8.2
Frustration overflowing just like Margs beach carparks	Hately, W.	2022	Augusta Margaret River Times	-	-	Google	MRR	7, 8	7.2; 8.4
Margaret River businesses grapple with staff shortages and division over vaccine mandates	Loney, G.; Pancia, A.	2022	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Tourist parks turn away desperate locals as families forced into caravan life	Murphy, R.; Loney, G.	2022	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Things to do in Margaret River	Australia's South West	2022	-	-	Australia's South West	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Caves House group	National Trust of WA	2022	-	-	National Trust of WA - State Heritage Office	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Illegal campers caught en masse in Margaret River raid	Pancia, Anthony	2022	ABC News	-	-	Google	MRR	7	7.2
Perth Airport - Corporate   History	Perth Airport	2022	-	-	Perth Airport	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Timeline: WHO's COVID-19 response	WHO	2022	-	-	WHO	Google	MRR	8	8.4
The Margaret River region - overnight visitor factsheet 2021	Tourism WA	2022	-	-	Tourism WA	Google	MRR	8	8.2
Surfing Margaret River Thriller - how it started 1986-1989.	VHS Surf Vult	2022	-	-	-	Youtube	MRR	6	6.4
Eco Destination	Shire of AMR	2022	-	-	Shire of AMR	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Shire of Augusta-Margaret River - Local history	Shire of AMR	2022	-	-	Shire of AMR	Google	MRR	6	6.4
Your Margaret River Region Latest Visitation	MRBTA	2022	-	-	MRBTA	Google	MRR	8	8.2; 8.4
Tourism Statistics	Tourism Australia	2022	-	-	Tourism Australia	Google	MRR	7	7.3
A timeline of Covid-19 in Australia in wake of grim milestone	Knowlton, C.	2022	Time Out Melbourne	-	-	Google	MRR	8	8.4

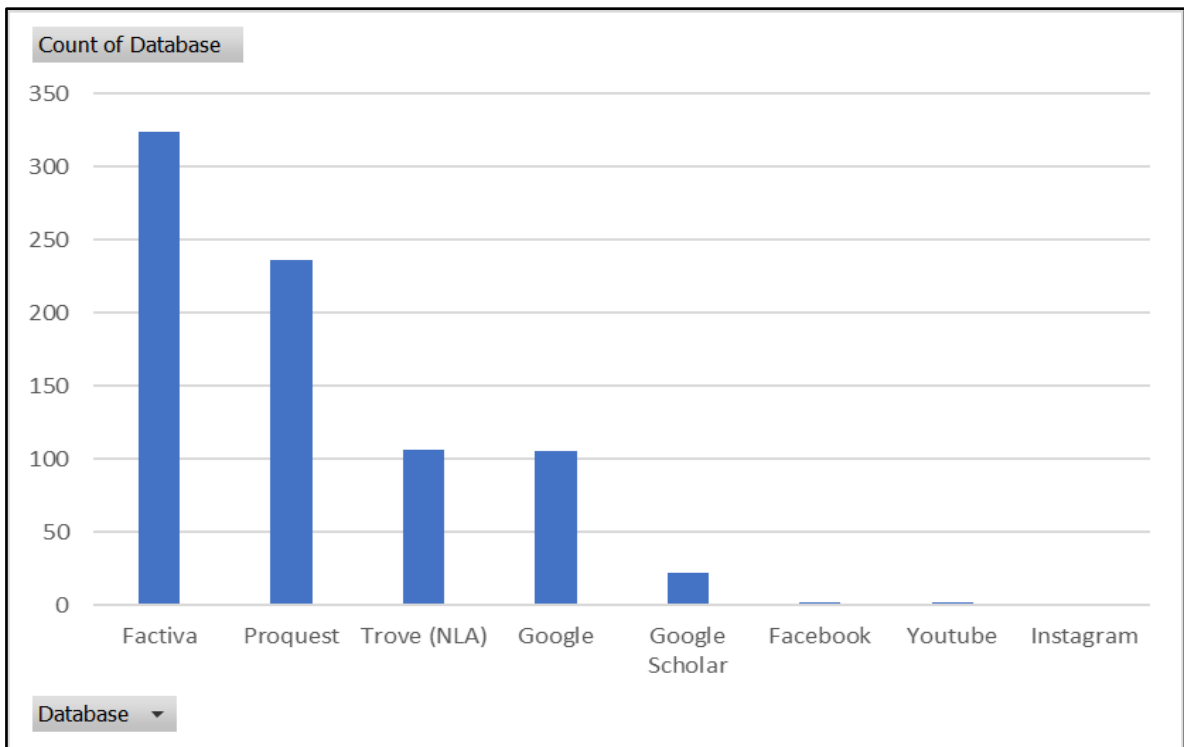
History - Mammoth Cave	MRBTA	nd	-	-	MRBTA	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
History - Lake Cave	MRBTA	nd	-	-	MRBTA	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
History and Aboriginal Culture	MRBTA	nd	-	-	MRBTA	Google	MRR	6, 7	6.2; 6.4; 7.3
Caves in the Margaret River area	Margaret River & Districts Historical Society	nd	-	-	MRDHS	Google	MRR	6	6.2; 6.4
Wadandi, Saltwater People	Undalup Association	nd	-	-	Undalup Association	Google	MRR	7	7.3
Climate Action AMR	Climate Action AMR	nd	-	-	-	Facebook	AMR	7	7.3



Number of documents per year (1848-2022)



*Geographical focus of documentary analysis*



*Distribution of databases utilised for documentary analysis*



## Appendix 4: Participant information sheet



### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

Sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region (WA, Australia)

Principal Investigator: David Flood

Supervisor(s): Dr Piotr Niewiadomski (University of Aberdeen, UK)

Dr Tod Jones (Curtin University, Australia)

I am David Flood, a PhD student in the School of Design and the Built Environment at Curtin University (WA, Australia), and in the School of Geoscience at the University of Aberdeen (Aberdeen, United Kingdom). I would like to invite you to consider participating in the research project "**Sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region (WA, Australia)**". Below is some information about the project, to help you decide whether you would like to take part.

**Participation in the research project is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason.**

#### **AIMS**

The aim of the project is to understand better the sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region. The project will focus on Margaret River shire and the City of Busselton. The specific research questions which the project aims to answer are:

1. How sustainable is the tourism industry in the Margaret River region, and how advanced is the region's transition to greener forms of tourism in the context of the state and regional environmental policies?
2. How path-dependent is the green economy transition in tourism in the Margaret River region, and how is it linked to different historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors?
3. What developmental (path-shaping) potential, in economic and social terms, is the transition to greener forms of tourism in the region generating?
4. What is the transformative potential of the COVID-19 pandemic to foster green economy transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region?

The research understands tourism as a composite of different industries and sectors including transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, travel, recreation, and leisure. In that sense, a transition to sustainable forms of tourism in the region could have a large positive impact.

Hence, the outcomes of the project are expected to provide relevant information about the role of innovation in the sustainability transition in tourism in the region. Likewise, the project is expected to generate recommendations for the regional tourism industry and for policymakers.

#### **WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO**

You are invited to participate in this research on the basis of your involvement in tourism and sustainable tourism development in the Margaret River shire and the City of Busselton. I would like to organise an online or face to face interview with you to ask a number of questions related to the objectives of the research. The online interviews will be using an adequate software at a time that is convenient for you. Likewise, in case the interview is face to face, they will take place in a location and at a time that are convenient to you. Given the timeframe of the research, the interview should take place between January and March 2021. The

January 2021



interview should not take longer than one hour. Moreover, during the interview you will be given the opportunity to ask questions or request clarifications about the topic or the questions asked by the researcher. Likewise, during the interview it will be possible that the researcher takes notes.

### **RISKS**

The interview is not expected to cause any risk of any kind to you, or the organisation/institution/company that you represent. Likewise, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, without explaining your reasons. You also have the right to withdraw from the research at any time or to stop/pause the interview whenever you prefer. The researcher has no intention to ask any questions that might cause any distress to you.

### **DATA MANAGEMENT AND STORAGE**

All audio recordings will be transcribed. All data collected during the research will be safely stored on a University of Aberdeen and/or Curtin University repository. It will be stored up to 5 years after the research ends.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

The University's Privacy Notice for Research Participants is available [here](#).

Raw data and the identity of participants will not be released to anyone outside the research team. The data you provide will be analysed and may be used in publications, dissertations, reports or presentations derived from the research project, but this will be done in such a way that your identity is not disclosed.

The data collected from the interviews will be stored on a safe drive of both universities without attaching the names of any participant. Hence, the information obtained will be fully anonymised.

### **CONSENT**

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to indicate your consent by signing the attached Consent Form.

### **SPONSORS**

This research is funded by the Curtin-Aberdeen Alliance.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact me or my supervisors:

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Dr Piotr Niewiadomski	+44 1224 272349	<a href="mailto:p.niewiadomski@abdn.ac.uk">p.niewiadomski@abdn.ac.uk</a>
Dr Tod Jones	+61 449 155 101	<a href="mailto:t.jones@curtin.edu.au">t.jones@curtin.edu.au</a>

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Convener of the Physical Sciences & Engineering Ethics Board at the University of Aberdeen:

Email: [copsethics@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:copsethics@abdn.ac.uk)

[hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au)

This research project was approved by the Physical Sciences & Engineering Ethics Board of the University of Aberdeen on 01/09/2020.

This research project was approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee on 05/01/2021.

January 2021



## Appendix 5: Consent form



### Sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region (WA, Australia)

Consent form for participation in the research project

Please complete the form below by ticking the relevant boxes and signing on the line below. A copy of the completed form will be given to you for your own record.

Please Tick Box

- I confirm that the research project *"Sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region (WA, Australia)"* has been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I consent to the material I contribute being used to generate insights for the research project *"Sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region (WA, Australia)"*.
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time.
- I consent to the interview being audio recorded. I understand that I can request at any time that recording is stopped. I understand that I can ask for the recorded audio to be deleted.
- I consent to allow the fully anonymised data to be used for future publications and other scholarly means of disseminating the findings from the research project.
- I understand that the information/data acquired will be securely stored by researchers, but that appropriately anonymised data may in future be made available to others for research purposes. I understand that the University may publish appropriately anonymised data in its research repository for verification purposes and to make it accessible to researchers and other research users.
- I agree to take part in the above *"Sustainability transitions in tourism in the Margaret River region (WA, Australia)"*.

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
David Flood	Date	Signature
Name of researcher		

January 2021