

Emotional Returns and Diasporic Belonging: Identity, Memory, and Generational Change among Bulgarian Turks

Bayram Kanca ^{1*} and Çağdaş Ertaş ²

^{1*} Department of Recreation Management, Giresun University, Giresun, Türkiye; E-mail: bayram.kanca@giresun.edu.tr; ORCID: 0000-0002-0398-8152

² Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, Dicle University, Diyarbakir, Türkiye; E-mail: ertascagdas@hotmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0001-9641-8054

*Corresponding author

Abstract

This study explores the complex and emotionally layered experiences of diaspora tourism among Bulgarian Turks, a regionally situated diaspora shaped by forced migration and cultural proximity. Using a qualitative methodology based on 34 semi-structured interviews, the study investigates how return visits to Bulgaria influence identity formation, intergenerational memory, and emotional belonging. Findings reveal significant generational differences: while first-generation migrants perceive return visits as emotionally charged acts of reconnection, younger generations view them as symbolic rituals shaped by familial obligation or cultural curiosity. The study highlights the gendered dynamics of diaspora tourism, with women often assuming roles as cultural transmitters and emotional caretakers. Participants also encountered linguistic barriers and cultural unfamiliarity, leading to fragmented belonging and emotional ambivalence. By examining diaspora tourism through the lenses of transnationalism, gender, and post-memory, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of return travel as both an act of remembrance and a negotiation of identity. This study advances existing diaspora tourism frameworks by demonstrating that return travel is not only shaped by transnational mobility or long-distance displacement but also by regional trauma, state-imposed assimilation, and intergenerational silence.

Keywords: Diaspora tourism, Transnational identity, Bulgarian Turks, Generational belonging, Gendered memory, Emotional ambivalence.

Citation: Kanca, B., & Ertaş, Ç. (2026). Emotional Returns and Diasporic Belonging: Identity, Memory, and Generational Change among Bulgarian Turks. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 42, 4210. <https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v42i.4267>.

Publication history:

Received: 29/04/2024; Revised: 23/06/2025; 24/11/2025; Accepted: 29/11/2025; Published online: 01/02/2026;

Volume date: 01/03/2026

Coordinating editor: Stanislav Ivanov



© 2026 The Author(s)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

1. Introduction

The forced migration of over 340,000 Bulgarian Turks to Türkiye between 1986 and 1990, driven by the Bulgarian Communist Party's discriminatory policies, has created a complex historical narrative that continues to shape the identities and experiences of this community today (Vasileva, 1992; Petkova, 2002). The systematic exclusion and ethnic cleansing faced by Bulgarian Turks during this period led to their displacement, as they sought refuge in Türkiye (Kutlay, 2017). Understanding this historical context is crucial for comprehending the motivations behind the contemporary phenomenon of diaspora tourism among Bulgarian Turks, who now return to their ancestral homeland to reconnect with their roots.

Diaspora tourism is characterized by emotional pilgrimages that go beyond mere travel; it embodies a quest for identity and belonging. Diaspora tourism often serves as a means for individuals to address feelings of homesickness and explore their cultural heritage (Etemaddar *et al.*, 2015). The emotional attachment to one's homeland plays a significant role in motivating these journeys, as individuals seek to reaffirm their identities and reconnect with their cultural roots (Huang *et al.*, 2018). This is particularly relevant for Bulgarian Turks, who may experience a profound sense of nostalgia and a desire to reclaim their heritage through these visits.

The socio-cultural impacts of diaspora tourism are multifaceted. Research indicates that such journeys can foster a deeper understanding of one's identity and heritage, as well as strengthen familial and cultural ties (Filep *et al.*, 2021). For Bulgarian Turks, returning to Bulgaria may evoke memories and emotions tied to their past, facilitating a reconciliation with their history and identity (Otoo *et al.*, 2021a). Furthermore, these visits can contribute to the broader discourse on migration and identity, as they highlight the dynamic relationship between diasporas and their homelands (Çiki, 2022).

The strong desire of the rapidly increasing number international migrants to maintain their ties with their ancestral homelands makes diaspora tourism an increasingly important phenomenon (Huang & Chen, 2020; Li *et al.*, 2020; Otoo *et al.*, 2021b; Unguren *et al.*, 2021; Zou *et al.*, 2021; Zhu, 2023). The literature on migration, transnationalism, and diaspora tourism illustrates the complex relationship between identity, displacement, and homeland travel. Diaspora tourism is more than a means of travel; it represents an identity-seeking journey shaped by transnational belonging and intergenerational heritage transmission (Etemaddar *et al.*, 2015). Although a substantial body of diaspora tourism research has examined transnational movements among well-established populations such as Chinese, Mexican, Polish, and Irish communities (e.g., Brown, 2011; Brubaker, 2005; Bryce *et al.*, 2017; Cohen, 2022; Kenny, 2013; Liu *et al.*, 2025), regionally situated diasporas formed through forced or proximate migration remain comparatively underexplored. The case of Bulgarian Turks therefore extends this body of work by drawing attention to intra-regional, post-socialist, and politically charged forms of return travel. This study examines how transnationalism theory (Vertovec, 2004) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) intersect to explain generational differences in motivations, attachment, and alienation in diaspora tourism. By integrating these frameworks, this research uncovers the emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of return visits, particularly the role of nostalgia, cultural barriers, and gendered tourism motivations. The findings contribute to broader discussions on diaspora identity, homeland nostalgia, and cross-border cultural heritage tourism. By integrating transnationalism and social identity theory, the study aims to uncover the emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of return visits, examining the intergenerational differences that shape homeland experiences. Through this approach, the research provides new insights into the evolving dynamics of diaspora tourism and its broader implications for migration studies and cultural heritage tourism.

The study is primarily grounded in transnationalism theory (Vertovec, 2004) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), both of which provide complementary lenses for interpreting diasporic return

travel. Transnationalism captures the ongoing social, cultural, and emotional linkages that migrants maintain across borders, while social identity theory explains how individuals derive meaning and belonging from group membership and collective heritage. Together, these frameworks offer a foundation for examining diaspora tourism as a process that intertwines mobility, memory, and identity affirmation. While both theories originate in migration and social psychology, their application to tourism enables a deeper understanding of how travel to ancestral homelands becomes a performative act of belonging and identity negotiation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Diaspora tourism: a critical overview*

Originally used in reference to Jewish communities, the concept of 'diaspora' has since been broadened to encompass groups like the Armenian, Chinese, Greek, Indian, Kurdish, Palestinian, Parsi, and Sikh populations—communities whose histories of displacement, cultural preservation, institutional development, and sustained collective identity distinguish them from conventional immigrant groups (Safran, 2005). Diaspora communities represent a significant global presence, actively participating in both the creation and consumption of tourism experiences. Within host societies, these communities often foster strong emotional and social bonds among members, including migrants and their descendants who travel between their countries of residence and ancestral homelands—an area increasingly examined in tourism research (Weaver *et al.*, 2017). Diaspora tourism typically refers to the travel of individuals, often with migrant heritage, who journey to their ancestral land in an effort to connect with their roots or cultural heritage (Chen *et al.*, 2024). Diaspora tourism is increasingly conceptualized as a distinctive and emotionally layered form of travel, distinguished from leisure tourism by its affective intensity, ancestral connections, and identity-based motivations. It represents more than a visit to a place—it is often an emotionally charged journey to a symbolic homeland shaped by personal or inherited memories, histories of migration, and the desire to (re)construct belonging (Etemaddar *et al.*, 2016; Huang *et al.*, 2013; Liu *et al.*, 2025).

Diaspora tourism is an umbrella term encompassing several overlapping forms of heritage- and identity-based travel. Scholars have used terms such as ancestral tourism, roots tourism, genealogy tourism, and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) to describe similar patterns of return travel (Huang *et al.*, 2016; Li & McKercher, 2016; Murdy *et al.*, 2018). Although these categories differ slightly in motivation and scope, they all share a focus on the emotional and cultural reconnection between diasporic individuals and their ancestral or familial homelands. This conceptual overlap reflects the field's evolution from purely heritage-based frameworks toward more dynamic understandings of identity, belonging, and transnational mobility.

The motivations for diaspora tourism are multifaceted and vary across generations. Scholars have identified several key drivers including nostalgia (Zeng & Xu, 2021), experiential drive (Otoo *et al.*, 2020), cultural continuity (Bryce *et al.*, 2017), emotional healing (Li & Chan, 2017), a sense of moral obligation to elders or family memory (von Koppenfels *et al.*, 2015), and the pursuit of a deeper self-understanding (Li & McKercher, 2016). For instance, Huang *et al.* (2016) found that second-generation Chinese-American diaspora tourists in the U.S. use homeland travel to mediate their transnational attachment—negotiating their place between inherited identity and American upbringing.

While first-generation migrants often seek to reconnect with lost roots or resolve historical trauma, second- and third-generation diaspora tourists approach the homeland more as a symbolic or imagined space. Tan *et al.* (2023), for example, demonstrated that among third-generation Chinese diaspora in Malaysia, gender plays a role in shaping motivations. While men were more influenced by curiosity or by social pressure to fulfill familial expectations—such as accompanying parents on return trips or maintaining visibility within kinship networks—women's motivations were more often shaped by

emotional responsibility and the desire to sustain intergenerational memory. These gendered dynamics in motivation are increasingly central to contemporary diaspora tourism debates (du Preez & Govender, 2020). In addition to generational and gendered variation, the emotional geography of diaspora tourism also differs significantly between groups and even within diasporas. Brown (2011), studying Polish communities in the UK, revealed divergent emotional geographies in diaspora tourists, depending on local integration, social class, and ethnic identity negotiation. Such findings complicate the assumption that all diaspora tourists seek the same emotional outcomes or engage with their ancestral land in similar ways.

Further complicating this landscape is the relationship between diaspora tourism and transnationalism. While transnational theory traditionally emphasizes migrants' sustained cross-border ties (Vertovec, 2004), recent scholarship argues that return travel may not always reaffirm these connections. Rather, it can expose ruptures, contradictions, and unmet expectations (von Koppenfels *et al.*, 2015). As Roberts (2022) found in her study of the Guyanese diaspora in Toronto, diaspora tourism also reveals mismatched expectations between tourists and host communities, where the commodification of "authenticity" can lead to frustration or disappointment. This echoes Bryce *et al.*'s (2017) study, which argues that homeland tourism often involves imagined, idealized pasts that clash with present-day realities. These tensions produce what Etemaddar *et al.* (2016) call "moments of home"—fleeting and emotionally potent experiences that allow migrants to temporarily feel rooted, without necessarily resolving the underlying complexity of their identity.

Recent research has also shifted from focusing primarily on globally dispersed diasporas (Brubaker, 2005; Kenny, 2013; Cohen, 2022) to include more diverse and regionally situated groups such as Polish (Brown, 2011), Chinese (Zhu & Airey, 2021), Mexican, and South Asian populations (Chen *et al.*, 2024). These newer studies emphasize the importance of superdiversity, intersectionality, and context—arguing that diaspora tourism cannot be understood through a single lens of ethnicity or nostalgia alone.

Yet despite these advancements, gaps remain. The experiences of diasporas that are geographically proximate, forcibly displaced, or formed under authoritarian regimes—such as the Bulgarian Turks—are still rarely examined. Most diaspora tourism studies emphasize long-haul, globally dispersed diasporas who engage in tourism through a framework of voluntary return, while intra-regional and post-communist contexts remain underrepresented. The Bulgarian Turkish case, shaped by forced migration, bilingualism, and partial assimilation into the host society, offers a unique opportunity to explore how diaspora tourism operates under overlapping conditions of cultural familiarity and historical rupture.

Moreover, while recent systematic reviews (Chen *et al.*, 2024) call for greater attention to the socio-political entanglements of diaspora tourism, studies like that of Murdy *et al.* (2018) underscore the emotional and symbolic "pull" of homeland that continues to drive return visits, even in cases where connection to the physical place has eroded. These emotional forces, coupled with transgenerational meaning-making, suggest that diaspora tourism is as much about producing the idea of home as it is about revisiting it.

2.2. *Transnationalism and diaspora identity*

Transnationalism has become a central theoretical lens for understanding how migrants sustain ongoing ties with their countries of origin while simultaneously engaging in the social, cultural, and economic life of their host societies. According to Vertovec (2004), transnationalism challenges classical models of migration that assumed linear assimilation into the receiving country. Instead, transnationalism posits that migrants often live in "simultaneous embeddedness", maintaining

multifaceted relationships across national boundaries. These cross-border ties may include financial remittances, virtual communication, political engagement, religious practices, or symbolic acts such as return visits. In this context, diaspora tourism functions as both a material practice and a symbolic ritual that embodies and reinforces these transnational relationships (Patterson, 2006). Homeland visits allow migrants—and especially their descendants—to re-engage with cultural landscapes, visit ancestral sites, and maintain emotional or familial bonds. This re-spatialization of belonging blurs the fixed distinctions between “home” and “host” societies, as diaspora individuals cultivate multilocal attachments.

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), individuals define themselves partly through the social groups to which they belong, drawing psychological meaning from shared culture, ethnicity, or collective memory. Within diaspora tourism, this theoretical lens illuminates how return travel functions as both a symbolic and experiential affirmation of heritage identity. Homeland visits can strengthen a sense of in-group belonging while simultaneously exposing the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ through encounters with local populations. Thus, Social Identity Theory complements transnational perspectives by linking emotional identification with spatial and cultural mobility.

Levitt and Schiller (2004) extend this idea with the concept of “transnational social fields”, emphasizing that migrants simultaneously participate in and shape multiple cultural and social environments. Diaspora tourism can thus be seen not merely as a personal journey, but as an expression of social positioning across transnational fields, where belonging is enacted through affective, embodied, and collective experiences. Return travel becomes a performative act that reaffirms one’s place in a dispersed yet emotionally coherent community. However, transnational belonging is not experienced uniformly across generations or demographic groups. As Clifford (1994) famously theorized, diasporas are “communities with a difference”—defined by hybridity, discontinuity, and a persistent sense of displacement. This difference is especially pronounced in second- and third-generation migrants, for whom the homeland may be known only through family narratives, media representations, or curated visits. For these individuals, homeland travel becomes less about recovery of a lost identity and more about ritualized identity negotiation—a process of reconciling the inherited meanings of homeland with their contemporary realities (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

This intergenerational variation has been supported by empirical studies showing that while first-generation migrants often seek closure, continuity, or even healing through return visits, later generations are more likely to engage in symbolic reconstruction of identity through tourism. These journeys serve as opportunities to learn, interpret, or selectively engage with the heritage narratives passed down from parents or grandparents (Bryce *et al.*, 2017; Huang *et al.*, 2016; Murdy *et al.*, 2018). For some, return visits may trigger emotional attachment; for others, they may provoke cultural alienation or disconnection.

Moreover, the construction of diaspora identity through tourism is not only generational but also deeply structured by social variables such as language, gender, class, and religion. Mahler and Pessar’s (2001) gendered geographies of power framework argues that transnational practices are shaped by unequal power relations, particularly in patriarchal and traditional societies. In this regard, diaspora tourism is not merely a cultural act, but also a gendered performance of memory, care, and belonging. For instance, women may be tasked with the emotional labor of transmitting heritage to children or managing family expectations around return visits. They may act as caregivers during trips, curators of family narratives, and organizers of intergenerational travel. Meanwhile, men may experience greater freedom to engage with return travel pragmatically or economically, rather than emotionally (Tan *et al.*, 2023; Etemaddar *et al.*, 2016). These asymmetric responsibilities shape not only who travels and why, but how diaspora tourism is experienced and remembered. While transnationalism and social identity

theory form the primary theoretical foundations of this study, the concepts of transnational social fields (Levitt & Schiller, 2004) and gendered geographies of power (Mahler & Pessar, 2001) are employed as supporting frameworks to interpret how social relations and gendered roles shape diaspora travel experiences.

Throughout this study, the term emotional labor is used to describe the affective work individuals perform to maintain familial bonds, cultural continuity, and collective memory within diaspora contexts. Originating in Hochschild's (1983) theory, emotional labor involves the management of feelings to fulfill social or relational expectations. In diaspora tourism, this may include the emotional effort of reconnecting with ancestral spaces, preserving heritage for younger generations, or negotiating the psychological tensions of return. Such emotional work, often performed disproportionately by women, highlights the affective dimensions of transnational belonging.

Despite these insights, many studies (e.g., Huang *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2020; Li & Chan, 2017; Otoo *et al.*, 2021a) continue to treat diaspora identity as either fixed or culturally uniform. This overlooks the complexity of how identity is negotiated dynamically—often inconsistently—through embodied experiences of place, especially during tourism encounters. For diasporas formed through trauma and forced displacement, such as the Bulgarian Turks, identity formation through travel can be particularly complex. Their relationship with the homeland is neither freely chosen nor purely nostalgic; it is historically burdened, emotionally ambivalent, and shaped by political rupture. For them, transnationalism is not a romantic connection—it is a negotiation of visibility, memory, and often, pain. Thus, this study builds on transnational and diaspora theories by not only recognizing the continuity of ties across borders, but also attending to the tensions, inequalities, and emotional contradictions embedded in the return. It emphasizes that diaspora identity is fluid, situated, and socially constructed—especially through travel experiences that reveal the often invisible layers of intergenerational memory, social obligation, and structural power.

2.3. *Bulgarian Turks: a distinctive diaspora context*

The case of the Bulgarian Turks represents a compelling and underexplored example within the broader field of diaspora studies. Between 1986 and 1990, more than 340,000 ethnic Turks were expelled or pressured to leave Bulgaria in what is widely regarded as a state-orchestrated ethnic cleansing campaign by the Bulgarian Communist Party (Vasileva, 1992; Kutlay, 2017). These forced migrations were part of the so-called “Revival Process” (Bakalova, 2006), which sought to erase Turkish identity by mandating name changes, banning the Turkish language, and suppressing Islamic religious practices (Trupia, 2022). As a result, this group's relocation to Türkiye was not voluntary, but a traumatic rupture from their homeland.

What sets the Bulgarian Turks apart from globally dispersed diasporas is their regionally proximate relocation. Unlike diasporas formed through transoceanic movement (e.g., Indian, African, or Chinese diasporas), Bulgarian Turks migrated across a single border to a neighboring country with a shared religion (Islam), linguistic similarities, and partially overlapping cultural frameworks (Baeva & Kalinova, 2010). On the surface, this might suggest a smoother integration process. However, the historical, political, and emotional entanglements between Bulgaria and Türkiye complicate this assumption. Despite shared cultural signifiers, Bulgarian Turks were often treated in Türkiye as migrants or outsiders, labeled with terms such as “immigrant” or “Bulgarian migrant” (Deneva, 2013). This ambivalent reception created a liminal social identity, as Bulgarian Turks found themselves simultaneously “Turkish enough” to settle but “different enough” to remain marked. These contradictions contribute to a dual sense of belonging and estrangement that persists across generations—a condition highly relevant for understanding their experiences of return travel.

Existing research on Bulgarian Turks has primarily focused on themes such as integration in Türkiye (Petkova, 2002), their deportation (Emen Gökatalay, 2021), language preservation (Vassilev, 2010), education, and diaspora political mobilization (Kutlay, 2017), often within the framework of migration or minority studies. However, there is a noticeable gap in scholarship regarding how this group engages with diaspora tourism—that is, how they return to Bulgaria for personal, familial, or cultural reasons, and how such journeys are shaped by their intergenerational identities and historical trauma. This gap is particularly significant when considering the temporal dynamics of this diaspora. While the first generation experienced direct expulsion and trauma, the second and third generations are increasingly distant from the original rupture. For them, Bulgaria may represent a place of ancestral memory rather than lived experience. Understanding how these motivations differ by generation—and how they are influenced by gender, class, and the shifting political landscape—offers valuable insights into how diaspora tourism functions in post-authoritarian, intra-regional contexts.

Moreover, the Bulgarian Turkish case challenges dominant diaspora tourism models that presume geographic distance, voluntary return, or globally dispersed communities. In this case, proximity does not equate to ease of return or emotional resolution. On the contrary, it can intensify feelings of estrangement and alienation, especially when return visits are met with linguistic challenges, bureaucratic obstacles, or subtle social exclusions in Bulgaria. In summary, the Bulgarian Turks constitute a regionally situated, politically constructed diaspora, whose experiences complicate binary distinctions between hostland and homeland, belonging and exclusion, continuity and rupture (Kutlay, 2017). Studying their return visits through the lens of diaspora tourism enables a deeper understanding of how forced migration, emotional memory, and transgenerational identity are embodied and renegotiated through travel. As such, they offer a distinctive and necessary corrective to the global-north-centric, often voluntary models that dominate diaspora tourism literature.

2.4. *Research gap and contribution*

Although diaspora tourism has become a growing field of research in recent years (e.g., Li, 2020; Otoo *et al.*, 2021a; Zhu & Airey, 2021; Afrifah & Mensah, 2023; Otoo & Mensah, 2023; Wang & Witte, 2023; Zhu, 2023; Petra, 2024; Butterfield, 2025; Fu *et al.*, 2025), most studies focus on globally dispersed diasporas. These studies often examine long-distance return travel framed around symbolic reconnection, heritage seeking, or identity affirmation (Liu *et al.*, 2025). In contrast, regionally situated diasporas, like the Bulgarian Turks, have received limited scholarly attention. Their experiences challenge dominant models of diaspora tourism due to their forced migration, geographic proximity to the homeland, and their complex dual integration into both Turkish and Bulgarian societies (Kutlay, 2017). Ignoring such cases leaves a gap in our understanding of how return visits function in non-Western, post-authoritarian, and politically sensitive contexts, where emotional tensions and historical legacies shape the travel experience.

Another important gap concerns the gender dynamics of diaspora tourism. Although recent studies have begun to recognize that women and men may have different motivations and roles in return travel (Tan *et al.*, 2023; Du Preez & Govender, 2020), few have focused on how women's emotional labor and intergenerational responsibility shape diaspora tourism, especially in patriarchal, non-Western contexts. Women are often the ones who sustain cultural memory, organize return trips, and act as emotional anchors within families—but gender has been largely overlooked and insufficiently addressed in existing studies on diaspora tourism (Chen *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, few studies combine emotional, generational, and sociocultural perspectives in a single analytical framework. Existing research tends to treat themes like nostalgia, heritage, or belonging in isolation, without fully exploring how they intersect with power, memory, and family obligation. Studies that examine how the meanings of "home," "return," and "heritage" evolve across generations—and how these meanings are felt and performed during return visits—remain scarce (Chen *et al.*, 2024).

This study addresses these gaps by offering a transgenerational and gender-sensitive exploration of diaspora tourism among Bulgarian Turks. Through qualitative interviews across three generations, it shows how motivations, emotions, and senses of belonging shift with age, gender roles, and the legacy of displacement. It also highlights the invisible emotional labor performed by women as memory keepers and cultural transmitters, and how return travel often involves care work rather than just personal fulfillment. By focusing on an understudied, regionally situated diaspora, this study contributes new empirical insights to both tourism and migration scholarship.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study adopted a phenomenological research design, which seeks to uncover the lived experiences and meanings that individuals ascribe to a phenomenon—in this case, return travel to the ancestral homeland (Van Manen, 2023). The phenomenological approach was chosen to capture the subjective, emotional, and identity-laden dimensions of diaspora tourism that cannot be reduced to behavioral or structural patterns. This design aligns with the study's aim to interpret how Bulgarian Turks experience belonging, nostalgia, and cultural continuity through return visits. A qualitative approach is particularly well-suited for this research because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' motivations, emotional responses, and identity negotiations during their visits to Bulgaria (Patton, 2002). By focusing on subjective experiences, the study aims to uncover the complex and multifaceted dimensions of diaspora tourism, which cannot be captured through quantitative methods alone.

3.2. Sampling strategy

The study specifically targeted the Bulgarian Turks who migrated to Türkiye between 1984 and 1990 or their descendant, individuals who have engaged in at least one visit to Bulgaria for diaspora tourism purposes (e.g., reconnecting with family, exploring cultural heritage, visiting ancestral sites), and a mix of first-, 1.5 (child immigrants), and second-generation migrants to examine intergenerational differences in diaspora tourism motivations. Interested and eligible participants were contacted through email and various social media platforms. At this stage, purposeful sampling was used to select participants suitable for the purpose of the research and to reach accurate results (Creswell, 2007). Then, snowball sampling was used by asking the first interviewees to suggest other people who fit the research criteria and would agree to be research participants (Goodman, 1961). An important limitation of snowball sampling is that it may lead to possible sampling bias and the findings may not be generalizable (Rødgaard *et al.*, 2022). However, considering that the sample of this study is Bulgarian Turks in Türkiye, snowball sampling is an appropriate method due to the difficult to reach nature of this population (Leighton *et al.*, 2021).

The qualitative design—based on semi-structured interviews with 34 participants (see Table 1)—followed key stages of phenomenological inquiry. These included: (1) bracketing the researcher's preconceptions to focus on participants' lived experiences; (2) horizontalization, whereby all statements relevant to the phenomenon were identified; (3) clustering of significant statements into meaning units; and (4) synthesis of these units into overarching themes that represent the shared essence of participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). A sample size determined through the principle of data saturation (Guest *et al.*, 2006). Data saturation occurs when additional interviews yield no new themes or insights, indicating that the sample size is sufficient to capture the complexity of the phenomenon under study. In this research, saturation was reached around the 30th interview, as subsequent responses largely reiterated previously identified themes, such as nostalgia-driven return visits, generational differences in diaspora tourism motivations, and gendered variations in emotional attachment to Bulgaria. However, to ensure comprehensive coverage of participant experiences, additional interviews were conducted beyond the saturation point, particularly to capture variation across age groups and migration histories.

To enhance credibility and validity, this study employed data triangulation (Decrop, 1999) by integrating field notes and archival materials alongside interviews. Field observations during in-person interviews provided additional context for participants' emotional expressions. For example, while some 1.5th generation migrants verbally downplayed their connection to Bulgaria, observations revealed emotional responses-such as tears or prolonged pauses-when discussing their grandparents' migration stories (For example, P₁), indicating a deeper emotional attachment than initially expressed. Archival materials, including historical documents on the forced migration of Bulgarian Turks (e.g., Bulgarian state policies and Turkish government reports on refugee resettlement), also corroborated or complicated participant narratives. While most first-generation migrants described their displacement in traumatic terms, archival records suggest that some families voluntarily migrated under economic motivations rather than direct coercion. This discrepancy highlights the subjective nature of memory in diaspora tourism, reinforcing the need for a critical approach to self-reported data. Therefore, by employing data saturation as a sampling justification and triangulating findings with multiple sources, this study ensures methodological rigor and strengthens the reliability of its conclusions.

Table 1. *Characteristics of participants and their visit.*

Generation	Code	Age	Gender	Place of birth	Family's migration	Occupation	Visit frequency to Bulgaria	Length of stay	Visit motivation
First (n = 4)	P ₁	65	Female	Bulgaria	1986	Caregiver	Once every few years	10-20 days	Ancestral
	P ₂	63	Male	Bulgaria	1987	Technician	Once a year	1 month	Holiday & Leisure
	P ₃	50	Male	Bulgaria	1989	Retired	Once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P ₄	48	Female	Bulgaria	1990	Garment worker	More than once a year	1 month	Ancestral
1.5 Generation (Child immigrants) (n = 15)	P ₅	47	Male	Bulgaria	1989	Taxi driver	Once a year	1 month	Ancestral
	P ₆	47	Female	Bulgaria	1986	Retired	Once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P ₇	46	Female	Bulgaria	1988	Tailor	Once a year	10-20 days	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₈	46	Male	Bulgaria	1988	Taxi driver	Once every few years	10-20 days	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₉	45	Male	Bulgaria	1989	Technician	More than once a year	10-20 days	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₀	44	Female	Bulgaria	1987	Tailor	More than once a year	1 month	Ancestral
	P ₁₁	44	Female	Bulgaria	1989	Florist	Once every few years	10-20 days	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₂	43	Male	Bulgaria	1988	Cook	Once a year	1 month	Ancestral
	P ₁₃	42	Male	Bulgaria	1989	Garment worker	More than once a year	1 week	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₄	41	Female	Bulgaria	1989	Hairdresser	Once every few years	10-20 days	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₅	40	Female	Bulgaria	1987	Garment worker	Once a year	1 week	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₆	40	Male	Bulgaria	1987	Taxi driver	Once every few years	1 month	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₇	40	Female	Bulgaria	1988	Florist	Once a year	1 month	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₈	39	Female	Bulgaria	1988	Hairdresser	Once a year	1 week	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₁₉	38	Male	Bulgaria	1989	Taxi driver	More than once a year	1 week	Visit friend and relatives
	P ₂₀	34	Female	Türkiye	1987	Boutique owner	Once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure

Generation	Code	Age	Gender	Place of birth	Family's migration	Occupation	Visit frequency to Bulgaria	Length of stay	Visit motivation
Second (n = 15)	P21	34	Male	Türkiye	1989	Taxi driver	Twice so far	1 week	Ancestral
	P22	33	Male	Türkiye	1989	Civil engineer	Twice so far	1 week	Ancestral
	P23	31	Male	Türkiye	1989	Civil engineer	Once a year	1 week	Ancestral
	P24	30	Male	Türkiye	1987	Restaurant owner	Once a year	1 week	Ancestral
	P25	30	Female	Türkiye	1988	Boutique owner	Once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P26	29	Female	Türkiye	1987	Cook	Once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P27	28	Male	Türkiye	1987	Cook	Twice so far	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P28	27	Male	Türkiye	1989	Hairdresser	Twice so far	10-20 days	Visit friend and relatives
	P29	26	Male	Türkiye	1989	Student	Once a year	1 month	Visit friend and relatives
	P30	25	Male	Türkiye	1987	Student	Twice so far	1 week	Visit friend and relatives
	P31	25	Female	Türkiye	1988	Cook	Once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P32	24	Male	Türkiye	1987	Student	Once every few years	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P33	24	Female	Türkiye	1988	Student	More than once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure
	P34	22	Male	Türkiye	1986	Student	More than once a year	10-20 days	Holiday & Leisure

This study adopts widely used generational categories in migration research, distinguishing between first-generation migrants, 1.5th-generation individuals who migrated during childhood, and second-generation individuals born in Türkiye to migrant parents (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). As shown in Table 1, the sample comprises 4 first-generation, 15 one-and-a-half-generation, and 15 second-generation participants. This distribution reflects the demographic reality of the Bulgarian Turkish diaspora, in which younger generations increasingly dominate the population structure. Accordingly, the study's insights primarily capture intergenerational perspectives on diaspora tourism and transgenerational identity.

3.3. Data collection

Data were collected between January 1, 2024, and November 3, 2024, through semi-structured interviews allowing for flexibility in probing individual experiences while ensuring consistency across responses. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and were conducted in person and via online platforms (e.g., Zoom, WhatsApp) to accommodate participants residing in different locations. A set of guiding questions was developed based on prior diaspora tourism literature (e.g., Ayaz & Kanca, 2023; Huang *et al.*, 2015; Huang *et al.*, 2018; Otoo *et al.*, 2021a) and was refined with expert feedback to ensure clarity and relevance. The core interview questions are outlined in Table 2.

Ethical approval was obtained from a university ethics committee, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews were conducted. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and pseudonyms were assigned to protect their identities.

Table 2. *Key interview questions.*

Theme	Sample questions
Migration Background	Can you describe your migration experience or your family's migration history from Bulgaria to Türkiye? How has this influenced your sense of identity?
Travel Motivations	What motivated you to visit Bulgaria? Was your visit primarily for cultural exploration, family connections, or other reasons?
Emotional Experiences	How did you feel when you arrived in Bulgaria? Did you experience a sense of belonging or foreignness?
Cultural and Linguistic Barriers	Were there any challenges, such as language barriers or cultural differences, that affected your experience?
Generational Perspectives	Do you think your connection to Bulgaria is different from that of your parents or grandparents? If so, how?
Future Travel Intentions	Do you plan to visit Bulgaria again? Why or why not?

In addition to interviews, field notes were taken during in-person meetings to capture non-verbal cues, emotional expressions, and environmental contexts. Observational data were particularly useful in assessing how participants reacted when discussing personal migration histories and family reunions, providing additional depth to the analysis. To enhance data triangulation, the study also incorporated archival materials (e.g., Bulgarian and Turkish government policies on migration), social media content (e.g., Facebook groups of Bulgarian Turks discussing return visits), and tourism statistics on diaspora travel patterns from the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism. Using multiple data sources increased the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, allowing for cross-validation of findings and reducing reliance on self-reported narratives alone.

3.4. Data analysis

Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), where responses were coded into key themes such as identity negotiation, nostalgia, transnational ties, and cultural barriers. The iterative coding process ensured that emerging patterns were grounded in participant narratives. To enhance the credibility of findings, the study employed multiple trustworthiness strategies, including:

- **Member Checking:** After transcription and initial coding, participants were invited to review their interview summaries to confirm accuracy and offer additional reflections.
- **Intercoder Reliability:** Two independent researchers reviewed and coded 20% of the transcripts, achieving an intercoder agreement of 85%, which ensured consistency in theme identification.
- **Data Triangulation:** By incorporating field observations, secondary sources, and interview data, the study mitigated potential biases and strengthened analytical validity.

4. Findings

Thematic analysis yielded four core themes that emerged inductively from participants' narratives: (1) fragmented belonging and emotional ambivalence, (2) generational repositioning of homeland, (3) gendered labor of memory and cultural continuity, and (4) negotiating cultural and linguistic distance.

Each theme reflects a layered intersection of identity, memory, and emotional experience, demonstrating how diaspora tourism for Bulgarian Turks is shaped by intergenerational shifts, sociohistorical trauma, and affective contradictions. A summary of the themes and subthemes is presented in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, return visits often involved multiple, overlapping experiences, with linguistic alienation (62%) and outsider feelings (59%) emerging as the most prevalent themes. Emotional ambivalence, gendered caregiving roles, and intergenerational curiosity were also widely reported, indicating that participants' motivations and experiences of return were shaped by a mix of estrangement, cultural responsibility, and evolving connections to the ancestral homeland.

Table 3. *Emergent themes and subthemes.*

Main Theme	Subtheme	Frequency (n)	% of Participants
Fragmented Belonging and Emotional Ambivalence	Homeland estrangement	19	56%
	Memory–reality dissonance	17	50%
	Symbolic pilgrimage	12	35%
Generational Repositioning of Homeland	Cultural curiosity (1.5th/2nd generation)	15	44%
	Ancestral narrative inheritance	13	38%
Gendered Labor of Memory and Cultural Continuity	Emotional caretaking (mostly women)	18	53%
	Cultural transmission	16	47%
Negotiating Cultural and Linguistic Distance	Linguistic alienation	21	62%
	Feeling like an outsider	20	59%

Note. Participants contributed to multiple themes and subthemes; therefore, totals exceed $N = 34$.

4.1. *Fragmented belonging and emotional ambivalence*

One of the most consistent themes across participant narratives was the profound emotional dissonance they experienced during return visits to Bulgaria. While first-generation migrants often expressed strong affective ties to Bulgaria—referring to it as “home” or “the place of my childhood”—these emotions were frequently accompanied by feelings of estrangement, discomfort, and symbolic displacement. Their emotional connection to the physical landscape—neighborhoods, schools, places of worship—was tempered by the recognition that the social fabric of those spaces had changed irreversibly. For example, P2, a first-generation migrant, expressed:

“Walking through the streets where I grew up felt surreal. It’s like I belong, but at the same time, I’m a stranger. My name was changed, my language was taken away, and now I return as a guest in my own homeland.”

This duality—simultaneous familiarity and foreignness—captures what many participants described as an experience of “disjointed return.” Physical spaces triggered memories, but interactions with local residents, changes in language use, or even the modernization of urban spaces disrupted these nostalgic connections. Participants often reported that while they longed for a connection to place, the emotional geography of the homeland had shifted, leaving them without a clear anchor.

Importantly, this ambivalent sense of belonging was not limited to first-generation migrants. 1.5th and 2nd generation participants—many of whom were born in Türkiye and had only heard of Bulgaria through family stories—also described their visits in terms of emotional tension. For them, Bulgaria existed as an imagined homeland, constructed through intergenerational narratives, cultural fragments, and photographs. Upon visiting, these imagined landscapes collided with the realities of linguistic barriers, cultural unfamiliarity, and social othering. Several participants recounted being treated as outsiders or foreigners, despite their familial roots in the country. P15, a 1.5th generation participant, explained:

“Growing up, Bulgaria was this almost mythical place my parents talked about. I knew the village name, I’d seen the black-and-white wedding photos, and I imagined it as something sacred. But when I finally went, it didn’t match what I had pictured at all. I couldn’t speak the language properly, and people immediately recognized I wasn’t from there. They were polite, but I could feel the distance. It was like visiting a version of someone else’s memory—not my own.”

These experiences point to a form of symbolic estrangement, where the ancestral homeland does not offer the recognition or emotional warmth that diaspora individuals often expect. Instead of confirming a sense of belonging, the visit becomes an unsettling confrontation with difference and distance. The narratives consistently reflected a non-linear, non-restorative experience of return. Participants did not speak of closure or reconnection in simple terms. Instead, many occupied a liminal emotional state, oscillating between attachment and alienation, connection and detachment. This emotional ambivalence resonates with Clifford’s (1994) concept of diasporic identity as “dwelling-in-displacement”—a state of existing both within and outside of traditional notions of home.

In this context, participants could neither fully identify as tourists—since their trips were motivated by ancestral ties and family history—nor as returnees, as they were often not welcomed or recognized as belonging. This in-between status rendered their experiences of diaspora tourism deeply complex and emotionally charged. For some, return visits reinforced cultural and emotional disconnection; for others, they prompted new forms of reflection and identity negotiation, often leaving more questions than answers. Thus, the return to Bulgaria was not simply a physical journey, but an emotional reckoning—a negotiation of loss, identity, and memory that revealed the fragmented and evolving nature of belonging in diaspora. These insights challenge conventional narratives that depict diaspora tourism as a fulfilling homecoming and instead underscore the ambivalent and layered emotional terrain that characterizes return travel for forcibly displaced and regionally proximate diasporas like the Bulgarian Turks.

4.2. Generational repositioning of homeland

A notable divergence emerged in how participants of different generations perceived and engaged with the idea of “homeland.” For the first generation, Bulgaria often remained emotionally central—a space remembered with affection, longing, and loss. Many framed their return visits as pilgrimages to sites of personal memory and ancestral belonging. Their motivation to return was frequently driven by a desire to see family homes, visit cemeteries, reconnect with familiar landscapes, or re-enact life interrupted by political violence and exile. For example, P1, a first-generation migrant, stated:

“When I step off the bus in my village, I feel like I’m stepping into my own past. I recognize everything, even though it’s changed.”

In contrast, 1.5th and 2nd generation participants—especially those born in Türkiye or who migrated as children—rarely described Bulgaria as “home” in the traditional sense. Instead, they positioned the homeland as a narrative space—a place that existed primarily through stories told by parents and

grandparents. These participants often saw their visits not as emotional homecomings but as acts of familial duty, cultural exploration, or curiosity about inherited roots. For example, P34, a second-generation migrant, stated:

"I wasn't really interested in visiting Bulgaria, but my father insisted. He wanted me to see where our family came from, to experience our roots firsthand."

In addition, P11, a 1.5th generation migrant, stated:

"For me, it's a story I've heard all my life—where my grandparents were born, how they left. When I visited, it didn't feel like my story. It felt like I was watching theirs."

This generational shift suggests that the meaning of "return" is not simply weakened over time, but reframed. The homeland becomes symbolic rather than experiential—no longer the site of one's own memories, but rather a vessel of collective family history. For some, this symbolic value still carries weight and offers a way to connect with ancestry; for others, it leads to emotional detachment or even indifference. While the prior research interpreted generational change as a gradual weakening of homeland attachment (e.g., Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2002; Levitt, 2009), the current findings suggest a transformation. Rather than a simple decline, participants across generations demonstrated shifts in the form and meaning of attachment—transforming emotional ties into symbolic, narrative, or moral engagements with the homeland. It is important to note that these generational shifts should not be read as a linear erosion of diasporic identity but as a diversification of its expressions. Even among first-generation migrants, homeland perception was not static; participants often reinterpreted Bulgaria through the social and cultural lens of life in Türkiye, reflecting a process of repositioning rather than loss. Similarly, second- and second-generation individuals did not necessarily feel 'less attached,' but they expressed belonging in more mediated, symbolic, or narrative forms. This suggests that diasporic attachment evolves adaptively, shaped by temporal distance, family memory, and sociocultural context rather than by generational decline.

4.3. Gendered labour of memory and cultural continuity

Gender emerged as a powerful structuring force in how diaspora tourism was experienced, organized, and remembered. The notion of "gendered labour of memory and cultural continuity" in this study refers to the emotional and practical work performed to sustain collective memory, transmit cultural traditions, and preserve transgenerational ties within diasporic families. This idea draws conceptually from the feminist migration framework of Mahler and Pessar's (2001) gendered geographies of power and Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labour. Together, these perspectives highlight how gender shapes transnational practices, assigning women the social responsibility of caregiving, remembrance, and cultural mediation. Within diaspora tourism, such labour manifests through the organization of return visits, the maintenance of kinship rituals, and the preservation of familial narratives about homeland and displacement. In this sense, women's engagement with diaspora tourism extends beyond leisure or nostalgia—it represents a form of intergenerational cultural stewardship.

Across generations, female participants disproportionately assumed the role of emotional facilitators and cultural transmitters during return visits. Women described themselves as responsible for planning trips, navigating family expectations, preserving ancestral narratives, and introducing younger family members to "where we come from." P17, female and a 1.5th generation, explained:

"I take my mother back every year. It matters more to her, but it's become my duty too. I explain things to my children, take them to the house, to the graveyard. It's a lot of work."

Unlike men, whose narratives often emphasized logistics or abstract reflection, women portrayed return travel as a form of care work—both emotional and symbolic. This includes managing the affective dynamics of multigenerational travel, translating across languages and experiences, and ensuring that family rituals tied to memory (such as visiting graves or family homes) are maintained. Even among younger women, there was a clear sense of intergenerational obligation—a belief that return visits were important for honoring family histories and sustaining cultural continuity. P6, a 1.5th generation female migrant, described her return visit as deeply emotional:

“The moment I stepped into our old house, I couldn’t stop crying. My mother cooked in that kitchen, we played in that yard. These memories are part of me, no matter where I live.”

In contrast, male participants often positioned themselves as more detached or neutral, describing return visits as “interesting,” “informative,” or “uncomfortable,” but rarely as deeply emotional or morally necessary. This contrast reinforces the insights of Mahler and Pessar (2001), who argue that transnational engagement is deeply shaped by gendered geographies of power. For example, P16 noted:

“I left Bulgaria when I was ten. My parents talk about it all the time, but for me, Türkiye is home. I don’t feel the need to go back and relive those memories.”

This gendered division of roles highlights a gap in current diaspora tourism literature, which often overlooks the invisible, unpaid, and emotional work that underpins return visits. While these findings expand conventional understandings of diaspora tourism beyond leisure and self-affirmation, they do not negate its touristic nature. For many women, return visits blend emotional responsibility with meaningful travel—rituals of care, family cohesion, and cultural renewal that transform tourism into a relational and affective practice rather than purely recreational mobility.

4.4. Negotiating cultural and linguistic distance

Despite shared ancestry and emotional investment, many participants—particularly from the second and second generations—experienced cultural and linguistic alienation during their visits to Bulgaria. One of the most common sources of discomfort was language. Several participants, especially younger ones, reported limited proficiency in Bulgarian and felt that their Turkish dialect, mannerisms, or accent marked them as outsiders, even before they identified themselves. P29, a second generation participant, shared their frustration:

“I wanted to connect with people, but I don’t speak Bulgarian well. I felt like an outsider, even though this is supposed to be my homeland.”

This felt foreignness, even in the place their family once called home, disrupted their expectations of connection and belonging. In some cases, participants described being treated with suspicion, politeness, or mild indifference by locals—interactions that subtly reinforced their outsider status. Others recounted moments of emotional discomfort when they realized that cultural codes, humor, or even body language felt unfamiliar or misunderstood. P30 recounted an experience at a local market:

“I was excited to visit the town my grandparents grew up in, but the locals treated me like a foreigner. They could tell I wasn’t from there, even before I spoke.”

Such moments illustrate how belonging is not only emotional or ancestral—it is also social and performative. Feeling “at home” requires being recognized and accepted by others, a condition that many participants did not fully experience. Instead, they occupied a hybrid position: emotionally

invested but socially unrecognized, familiar yet foreign. This echoes Bryce *et al.*'s (2017) observation that many diaspora tourists experience a clash between imagined pasts and lived realities.

These accounts challenge the romanticized notion of return tourism as a seamless reconnection with cultural roots. Instead, they underscore how diaspora tourists must negotiate cultural gaps, symbolic mismatches, and identity tensions, often without clear resolution. For younger participants, these experiences sometimes led to frustration or disillusionment. For others, they provided opportunities for critical reflection about the constructed nature of heritage and the limits of ancestry as a basis for belonging.

These linguistic and cultural tensions reveal that return visits are not simply about retracing ancestral footsteps—they are also moments where diaspora identity is tested, contested, and reconfigured. This layer of distance complicates the emotional narrative of “homecoming” and points to the need for a more nuanced understanding of how diaspora tourism involves not only connection, but confrontation—with language, culture, and oneself.

5. Discussion

This study contributes to diaspora tourism literature by uncovering the complex, emotionally ambivalent, and socially mediated experiences of return among Bulgarian Turks across generations. While prior scholarship often portrays homeland visits as restorative or affirming (Huang *et al.*, 2013; Li & Chan, 2017), the findings here offer a more nuanced picture—one shaped by generational positioning, gendered responsibilities, and cultural dissonance. Participants' return journeys function not simply as reconnections with the past, but as emotionally and socially negotiated acts of identity work.

A key finding of this study is that homeland travel often provokes conflicting emotions, particularly among first-generation participants who experienced forced displacement. Rather than producing a sense of closure or reconciliation, return visits frequently rekindled feelings of loss, distance, or unease. This emotional ambivalence complicates transnationalism theory (Vertovec, 2004), which emphasizes sustained connections between host and home societies. Our participants' narratives suggest that these ties may persist, but they do so in fragmented, symbolic, and often painful forms, particularly when the homeland has changed socially and politically since migration. 1.5th and 2nd generation participants also described being treated as outsiders, despite their familial origins in Bulgaria. These interactions—shaped by language barriers, cultural misalignment, and social perception—reveal that homeland belonging is not automatically conferred by ancestry. Feeling “at home” in a return context requires recognition by others, which many did not receive. This experience echoes Bryce *et al.* (2017), who argue that diaspora tourists often face a disjuncture between imagined pasts and lived realities. In our case, the participants' discomfort was not due to nostalgia being unmet, but rather to their symbolic identity not being socially acknowledged. These challenges romanticized views of diaspora tourism as healing and highlights the social construction of foreignness—even in ancestral spaces.

In this study, the term negotiated acts of identity work refers to the conscious and situational processes through which individuals construct, perform, and reconcile multiple identities in response to transnational experiences. Drawing on Jenkins' (2014) notion of identity as an ongoing negotiation between self-definition and social recognition, these acts involve managing the emotional, cultural, and familial expectations associated with both hostland and homeland belonging. Within diaspora tourism, identity work becomes particularly visible as participants reinterpret the meanings of ‘home’ and ‘heritage’ through return travel. While previous research often interprets diasporic attachment as declining across generations, the present study reveals that such attachment endures but takes different emotional forms. For first-generation participants, attachment was expressed as longing and nostalgia, often directed toward a tangible place and personal past. Among 1.5th and 2nd generation participants,

attachment manifested through responsibility, witnessing, and the desire to uphold family memory. Although these may appear as duty or obligation rather than sentiment, they nonetheless signify an enduring moral and symbolic bond with the ancestral homeland—one that redefines attachment as care and continuity rather than physical return. This supports the idea that diaspora identity is transmitted through what Hirsch (2008) calls “postmemory”—the intergenerational transfer of traumatic or historical memory through stories, images, and emotional residues. Participants visited places they had never lived, guided by parents’ or grandparents’ narratives. This symbolic engagement with the homeland adds a critical layer to diaspora tourism theory, showing that homeland travel can serve not just individual identity affirmation, but also intergenerational continuity and ethical responsibility.

The study also highlights the gendered nature of diaspora tourism. Female participants consistently described taking responsibility for organizing trips, translating emotional meaning for younger relatives, and preserving rituals of remembrance. In contrast, male participants were more likely to describe visits in observational or pragmatic terms. These findings align with Mahler and Pessar’s (2001) concept of gendered geographies of power, in which women perform the affective labor that sustains transnational relationships. Importantly, diaspora tourism is rarely considered in terms of care work, yet our findings show that for many women, return travel is an act of relational labor rather than leisure. By ensuring that children “see where we come from” or accompanying aging parents “back one last time,” women become the emotional and logistical bridges between past and present. While gender has long been examined as a demographic or statistical variable in diaspora and migration studies, this research underscores its interpretive significance within the emotional and relational dimensions of return travel. Rather than proposing gender as a ‘new’ structuring variable, the findings emphasize the need to understand how gendered expectations and caregiving roles shape the quality and meaning of diaspora tourism experiences. In this sense, the study contributes to prior quantitative approaches by illuminating the lived, affective dimensions of gendered return travel.

The Bulgarian Turkish case offers a unique empirical and theoretical intervention. Unlike widely studied diasporas formed by voluntary migration, this group was forcibly displaced under an authoritarian regime and relocated to a culturally proximate yet socially ambivalent host country. Their experience complicates conventional diaspora models that emphasize distance, longing, and symbolic return. Here, proximity does not equal emotional closeness, and homeland return is not always welcomed, nor emotionally satisfying. The study also brings attention to post-communist and intra-regional diasporas, which remain understudied in the global literature. This study contributes to broadening the theoretical scope of diaspora tourism by emphasizing that return journeys are also shaped by regional histories of displacement and collective memory, not only by global mobility and long-distance dislocation. In the case of Bulgarian Turks, experiences of return are deeply intertwined with the lingering effects of political repression and the selective remembrance of past injustices within both sending and receiving societies. These dynamics reveal that diasporic return is informed as much by local historical trauma and generational silence as by transnational processes.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the multifaceted experiences of diaspora tourism among Bulgarian Turks through the intersecting lenses of mobility, memory, and identity. By adopting a qualitative and generationally layered approach, it offers new insights into how diasporic return is shaped not only by geography and ancestry, but also by emotional ambivalence, gendered responsibility, and symbolic reinterpretation across generations. Challenging simplified narratives of homeland tourism as a restorative journey, this research demonstrates that return travel can evoke unresolved tensions, cultural estrangement, and acts of care rather than self-fulfillment.

Empirically, the study contributes to diaspora tourism research by centring a regionally situated and politically specific diaspora group—the Bulgarian Turks. Unlike globally dispersed diasporas, this community migrated en masse under forced conditions to a neighbouring country, complicating notions of “home” and “return.” Their proximity to the homeland, combined with their partial assimilation into Turkish society, creates a uniquely ambiguous diasporic position, which remains underrepresented in current tourism literature. The study also reveals generational nuances in how homeland is remembered, imagined, and engaged with—ranging from emotional longing to moral obligation and cultural curiosity. Furthermore, the study highlights critical variations within the diaspora itself: generational differences in motivations, the gendered dynamics of emotional labour, and the contradictory experience of being treated as a tourist in one’s ancestral homeland. These findings enrich our understanding of intra-diasporic diversity and reveal the limitations of homogenized diaspora tourism narratives.

Ultimately, this research invites scholars, policymakers, and tourism stakeholders to reconsider how diaspora tourism is understood and facilitated. It is not merely a nostalgic return—it is a complex act of emotional negotiation shaped by history, identity, and relational responsibility. As the Bulgarian Turkish case shows, homecoming is not always about going back. For many participants, the act of return was less about reclaiming a lost home and more about recognizing which aspects of identity, memory, and cultural practice have endured across generations.

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study has three key theoretical contributions to the diaspora tourism literature. First, rather than assuming a linear decline in diasporic attachment across generations—as sometimes implied in diaspora tourism research—recent work highlights a more differentiated pattern. Studies show that while 1.5th generation descendants may exhibit weaker direct emotional ties to the homeland, later generations can re-engage through symbolic, heritage-oriented, or narrative forms of attachment (Huang *et al.*, 2013; Huang *et al.*, 2018). The present study aligns with this nuanced view. Because most participants were second- and second generation Bulgarian Turks, their relationships to the homeland were not characterised by erosion but by transformation: attachment was refracted into symbolic, ambivalent, and emotionally layered forms. Return visits rarely functioned as straightforward acts of identity affirmation; instead, they elicited emotions such as loss, unfamiliarity, and symbolic estrangement. These dynamics suggest that diasporic belonging persists across generations but changes in meaning and emotional register, thereby refining rather than contradicting earlier assumptions about intergenerational shifts in homeland attachment. Second, building on diaspora identity theory (Clifford, 1994; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), the study introduces a generational perspective on how attachment to homeland is reconfigured over time. For many second- and second generation participants, attachment to Bulgaria has not disappeared but evolved into symbolic engagement—where the homeland functions less as a site of direct return and more as a moral or narrative space sustained through family memory, storytelling, and ritual. This form of engagement illustrates how later generations reinterpret belonging through inherited emotions rather than lived experience. At the same time, such symbolic attachment should not be generalised across all cohorts: first-generation participants, though fewer in number, expressed more immediate and affective forms of longing tied to personal history and loss. Third, the study identifies a gendered pattern of care and memory work within diaspora tourism. Women acted as emotional anchors, trip organisers, and cultural transmitters—roles frequently noted in migration and family sociology but less often incorporated into tourism scholarship. By foregrounding these processes, the study shows that return travel is not gender-neutral; it is shaped by social expectations and the emotional labour women perform in sustaining family memory and cultural continuity (Mahler & Pessar, 2001). This finding situates diaspora tourism within broader gendered dynamics of transnational family life, offering a theoretical bridge between migration studies and tourism research.

6.2. Practical and policy implications

This study offers several actionable insights for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and local authorities in both Bulgaria and Türkiye. The findings highlight the potential of Bulgarian Turks as a distinct diaspora tourist segment with emotional, cultural, and historical ties to their ancestral homeland. From a practical perspective, tourism providers in Bulgaria could design heritage-based travel experiences that reconnect Bulgarian Turks with their family roots. Guided village tours, cultural festivals, and culinary events that celebrate shared traditions can enhance the emotional value of return visits. Organizing diaspora homecoming programs may further foster a sense of belonging and strengthen transnational ties. On the policy level, both countries can collaborate to reduce structural barriers. For instance, visa facilitation, dual citizenship policies, and targeted marketing campaigns aimed at Bulgarian Turks could improve mobility and engagement. Investment in tourism infrastructure that reflects the historical presence of this community—such as bilingual signage, heritage trails, and memorial spaces—would also increase appeal. By recognizing and supporting the Bulgarian Turkish diaspora as a unique tourist constituency, Bulgaria and Türkiye have the opportunity to deepen mutual cultural understanding, strengthen diaspora relations, and stimulate sustainable tourism development.

6.3. Limitations and future research directions

While this study provides important insights into the diaspora tourism experiences of Bulgarian Turks, several limitations should be acknowledged. The qualitative design—based on semi-structured interviews with 34 participants—offers depth but limits generalizability. In particular, the sample is not evenly distributed across generations, and the number of first-generation participants was considerably smaller compared to the 1.5th and 2nd generations. This imbalance may influence interpretations regarding the long-term transmission of diasporic identity. Future studies would benefit from a more balanced generational sample to explore intergenerational dynamics more systematically. Additionally, the study draws on self-reported narratives, which are subject to memory bias, nostalgia, and social desirability. A mixed-methods approach, combining interviews with survey data, could help triangulate findings and enhance reliability.

While this research emphasizes emotional and cultural dimensions, economic and political factors—such as citizenship policies, visa regimes, and financial barriers—were not explored. Future research could integrate political economy and migration policy perspectives to understand how structural conditions shape return travel. Another emerging area is the role of digital technologies in diaspora tourism. As social media and virtual heritage platforms increasingly mediate connections to the homeland, future studies could investigate how these tools affect identity negotiation and emotional attachment among younger generations.

Lastly, although gender differences were noted, more detailed research is needed to understand how gender roles shape diaspora tourism behaviours and memory work. Given the central role of women in sustaining cultural transmission, future studies should explore the gendered dimensions of intergenerational identity formation more explicitly. Together, these directions can help build a more nuanced and interdisciplinary understanding of diaspora tourism—one that accounts for the complex intersections of memory, identity, mobility, and belonging.

References

- Afrifah, M., & Mensah, J. (2023). Diaspora tourism and homeland development: Exploring the impacts of African American tourists on the livelihoods of local traders in Southern Ghana. *African Geographical Review*, 42(2), 125-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19376812.2021.1997612>

- Ayaz, E. N., & Kanca, B. (2023). A socio-cultural research on the people of Yağlıdere living in the USA within the scope of diaspora tourism. *Journal of Tourism & Gastronomy Studies*, 11(4), 3667-3686. <https://doi.org/10.21325/jotags.2023.1362>
- Baeva, I., & Kalinova, E. (2010). Bulgarian Turks during the transition period. In S. Katsikas (Ed.), *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities* (pp. 63-78). Anthem Press. <https://doi.org/10.7135/UPO9781843318286.005>
- Bakalova, M. (2006). The Bulgarian Turkish names conflict and democratic transition. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 19(3-4), 233-246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610601029797>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Brown, J. (2011). Expressions of diasporic belonging: The divergent emotional geographies of Britain's Polish communities. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4(4), 229-237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2011.01.004>
- Brubaker, R. (2005). The 'diaspora' diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987042000289997>
- Bryce, D., Murdy, S., & Alexander, M. (2017). Diaspora, authenticity and the imagined past. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 66, 49-60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.05.010>
- Butterfield, L. (2025). Black American women's roots travel. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 6(1), 100173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annale.2025.100173>
- Chen, S. X., Chen, Z., & Gui, Q. (2024). Entanglements in diaspora tourism: a systematic review. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 49(6), 1548-1567. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2022.2163554>
- Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3), 302-338. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/656365>
- Cohen, R. (2022). *Global diasporas: an introduction*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003256526>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Çiki, K. (2022). Bibliometric analysis of diaspora tourism studies. *Deturope - The Central European Journal of Tourism and Regional Development*, 14(2), 62-81. <https://doi.org/10.32725/det.2022.014>
- Decrop, A. (1999). Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 20(1), 157-161. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00102-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00102-2)
- Deneva, N. (2013). *Assembling Fragmented Citizenship*. Doctoral dissertation, Central European University. https://www.etd.ceu.edu/2012/deneva_neda.pdf
- du Preez, E. A., & Govender, L. K. (2020). Travelling to the Motherland: relating acculturation to diaspora tourism experiences. *Anatolia*, 31(2), 197-210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2020.1747220>
- Emen Gökatalay, G. (2021). A crisis of legitimacy or a source of political consolidation? The deportation of Bulgarian Turks in 1950-1951 and the Democratic Party. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 57(6), 920-934. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2021.1917394>
- Etemaddar, M., Duncan, T., & Tucker, H. (2016). Experiencing 'moments of home' through diaspora tourism and travel. *Tourism Geographies*, 18(5), 503-519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2016.1220973>
- Etemaddar, M., Tucker, H., & Duncan, T. (2015). Anchoring to identity through exploring another land: The Iranian diaspora in New Zealand. *Tourism Culture & Communication*, 15(3), 195-204. <https://doi.org/10.3727/109830415X14483038034128>
- Filep, S., Matteucci, X., Bateman, J., & Binns, T. (2021). Experiences of love in diaspora tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(16), 2547-2551. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.201163>

- Fu, Y., Gao, J., Timothy, D. J., & Wang, Y. (2025). Antecedents of cultural connectedness in diaspora tourism: Perspectives from the Chinese diaspora. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 62, 34-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2024.12.010>
- Goodman, L. A. (1961). Snowball sampling. *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 148-170. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2237615>
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Hirsch, M. (2008). *The Generation of Postmemory*. *Poetics Today*, 29(1), 103-128. <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2007-019>
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. University of California Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1p9gbk>
- Huang, W. J., & Chen, C. C. (2020). Influence of transnational leisure on diaspora tourism among contemporary migrants. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(3), 603-617. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520922315>
- Huang, W. J., Haller, W. J., & Ramshaw, G. P. (2013). Diaspora tourism and homeland attachment: An exploratory analysis. *Tourism Analysis*, 18(3), 285-296. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354213X13673398610691>
- Huang, W. J., Norman, W. C., & Ramshaw, G. P. (2016). Home away from home: diaspora tourism and transnational attachment of second-generation Chinese-Americans. Retrived from <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/48542>
- Huang, W. J., Ramshaw, G., & Norman, W. C. (2015). Homecoming or tourism? Diaspora tourism experience of second-generation immigrants. *Tourism Geographies*, 18(1), 59-79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2015.1116597>
- Huang, W., Hung, K., & Chen, C. (2018). Attachment to the home country or hometown? examining diaspora tourism across migrant generations. *Tourism Management*, 68, 52-65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.02.019>
- Itzigsohn, J., & Giorguli-Saucedo, S. (2002). Immigrant incorporation and sociocultural transnationalism. *International Migration Review*, 36(3), 766-798. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2002.tb00104.x>
- Jenkins, R. (2014). *Social identity*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315887104>
- Kenny, K. (2013). *Diaspora: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press. <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/diaspora-9780199858583>
- Kutlay, M. (2017). The Turks of Bulgaria: an outlier case of forced migration and voluntary return. *International Migration*, 55(5), 162-179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12381>
- Leighton, K., Kardong-Edgren, S., Schneidereith, T., & Foisy-Doll, C. (2021). Using social media and snowball sampling as an alternative recruitment strategy for research. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, 55, 37-42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecns.2021.03.006>
- Levitt, P. (2009). Roots and routes: Understanding the lives of the second generation transnationally. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(7), 1225-1242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830903006309>
- Levitt, P., & Schiller, N. G. (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002-1039. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00227.x>
- Li, T. E. (2020). Guanxi or weak ties? Exploring Chinese diaspora tourists' engagements in social capital building. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(8), 1021-1036. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1578340>
- Li, T. E., & Chan, E. T. (2017). Diaspora tourism and well-being: A eudaimonic view. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 63, 205-206. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.01.005>
- Li, T. E., & McKercher, B. (2016). Developing a typology of diaspora tourists: Return travel by Chinese immigrants in North America. *Tourism Management*, 56, 106-113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.04.001>

- Li, T. E., McKercher, B., & Chan, E. T. H. (2020). Towards a conceptual framework for diaspora tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(17), 2109-2126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1634013>
- Liu, A. T., Williams, A. M., Liu, A., Kim, Y. R., & Lin, P. M. (2025). A systematic analysis of diaspora tourism: Geographical perspectives and superdiversity. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 49(1), 146-159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10963480231152571>
- Mahler, S. J., & Pessar, P. R. (2001). Gendered geographies of power: Analyzing gender across transnational spaces. *Identities*, 7(4), 441-459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2001.9962675>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>
- Murdy, S., Alexander, M., & Bryce, D. (2018). What pulls ancestral tourists 'home'? An analysis of ancestral tourist motivations. *Tourism Management*, 64, 13-19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.07.011>
- Otoo, F. E., Kim, S. S., & Styliadis, D. (2021a). Diaspora tourists' emotional experience. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(6), 1042-1058. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2461>
- Otoo, F., Kim, S., & King, B. (2021b). African diaspora tourism - how motivations shape experiences. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 20, 100565. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2021.100565>
- Otoo, F. E., Kim, S. S., & Choi, Y. (2020). Developing a multidimensional measurement scale for diaspora tourists' motivation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(2), 417-433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519899990>
- Otoo, F. E., & Mensah, E. A. (2023). Dark diaspora tourism: experiences and meanings in liminal spaces. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(6), 1513-1533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2023.2248068>
- Patterson, R. (2006). Transnationalism: diaspora-homeland development. *Social Forces*, 84(4), 1891-1907. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0103>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 261-283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325002001003636>
- Petkova, L. (2002). The ethnic Turks in Bulgaria: Social integration and impact on Bulgarian-Turkish relations, 1947-2000. *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, 1(4), 42-59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14718800208405112>
- Petra, A. (2024). Small town markets and crowded buses: Later-generation Australian-Hungarian 'diaspora backpackers' narrate their journey to Hungary. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 35(3), 237-251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/taja.12512>
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The story of the immigrant second generation*. Univ of California Press.
- Roberts, S. (2022). Demand and supply perspectives on diaspora tourism: the case of Guyanese in Toronto. *Anatolia*, 33(2), 197-209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2022.2040912>
- Rødgaard, E. M., Jensen, K., Miskowiak, K. W., & Mottron, L. (2022). Representativeness of autistic samples in studies recruiting through social media. *Autism Research*, 15(8), 1447-1456. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2777>
- Safran, W. (2005). The Jewish diaspora in a comparative and theoretical perspective. *Israel Studies*, 10(1), 36-60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30245753>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In J. A. Williams & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Tan, K. L., Sim, P. L., Ting, H. B., Sim, W. Y., & Donohue, T. (2023). A gendered discourse of third-generation Chinese migrants on diaspora tourism: implications to industry players in Malaysia. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 19(2), 335-358. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2022.2069900>
- Trupia, F. (2022). What would have been my name? The Post-Memory of the "Generation After" the Revival Process in Bulgaria. *Contemporary Southeastern Europe*, 9(1), 47-64. <https://doi.org/10.25364/02.9:2022.1.4>

- Unguren, E., Tekin, Ö. A., & Bayirli, M. (2021). Exploring the effect of push and pull motivation factors on destination satisfaction: An Empirical Evidence from Amenity Migration Perspectives. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 28, 2811. <https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v28i.1946>
- Van Manen, M. (2023). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003228073>
- Vasileva, D. (1992). Bulgarian Turkish emigration and return. *International Migration Review*, 26(2), 342-352. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019791839202600209>
- Vassilev, R. (2010). Restoring the ethnolinguistic rights of Bulgaria's Turkish minority. *Ethnopolitics*, 9(3-4), 295-309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449050903551859>
- Vertovec, S. (2004). Migrant transnationalism and modes of transformation. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 970-1001. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00226.x>
- von Koppenfels, A. K., Mulholland, J., & Ryan, L. (2015). 'Gotta go visit family': Reconsidering the relationship between tourism and transnationalism. *Population, Space and Place*, 21(7), 612-624. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.1916>
- Wang, Q., & Witte, A. (2023). Hokkien Chinese diaspora visitors' image construction of their ancestral hometown: the role of the tourist gaze. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 18(6), 768-784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2023.2252112>
- Waters, M. C., & Jiménez, T. R. (2005). Assessing immigrant assimilation: New empirical and theoretical challenges. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 31(1), 105-125. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100026>
- Weaver, D. B., Kwek, A., & Wang, Y. (2017). Cultural connectedness and visitor segmentation in diaspora Chinese tourism. *Tourism Management*, 63, 302-314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.06.028>
- Zeng, Y., & Xu, R. (2021). An exploration of the relationships between nostalgia, involvement, and behavioral intention in diaspora tourism. *Sustainability*, 13(21), 12273. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112273>
- Zhu, J. J., & Airey, D. (2021). Diaspora Chinese tourism: Cultural connectedness and the existing academic insights. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 40, 100916. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100916>
- Zhu, Y. (2023). Memory, homecoming and the politics of diaspora tourism in China. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(1), 95-112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1844286>
- Zou, Y., Meng, F. & Li, Q. (2021). Chinese diaspora tourists' emotional experiences and ancestral hometown attachment. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 37(4), 1007-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100768>