

The many names of “Roots tourism”: An integrative review of the terminology

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Abstract:

The study provides an analysis of the inconsistencies in terminology in the literature on roots tourism. It explores the usage and relative popularity of 41 terms used to denote roots tourism. Based on the analysis of 203 definitions of the phenomenon, we developed a model of roots tourism and mapped the 41 terms on the two-dimensional matrix to provide a system for differentiating the meaning of the different terms. Furthermore, the model allows for identifying understudied types of roots tourism. Most importantly, the study provides directions for future terminology use around the phenomenon of roots tourism. The methodology employed in the present study can be used to integrate and systemize conflicting and overlapping terminologies in other fields.

Keywords: roots tourism | diaspora tourism | homeland tourism | sentimental tourism | nostalgia tourism | ethnic tourism |

Article:

1. Introduction

Roots tourism – which we define as international travel to places of one's own, or one's family, relatives, or ancestral origin for sentimental or other emotional reasons – is a significant and growing part of global travel. There are many reasons for “traveling back” to where one or one's family is from rediscovering one's roots, searching for identity and belonging, visiting friends and relatives, exploring family history, reliving past memories, exploring the places from stories shared by family members or history books, or simply because of practical convenience or familial obligation.

This growing type of tourism has a massive economic impact. As Harper (2017) puts it, “ancestral and emigrant tourism is a money-spinner” (p. 33). The exact figures are hard to come by, but for the countries that compile such statistics, roots tourism accounts for up to a quarter of all international visitors. For example, VisitScotland tracks ancestral tourism and reports that 213,000 trips worth \$101 million are made to Scotland annually by visitors who engage in ancestral research. Similarly, it is estimated that up to a million tourists come to Ireland each year to “investigate their roots” (Hogan, 2019). A study commissioned by the European Commission

(UNWTO, 2018) found that of the 619 million international trips to the U.E. in 2016, which brought in \$406 billion, 24% were “for reasons such as visiting friends and relatives (VFR), religious reasons and pilgrimages” (p. 20). Outside the E.U., hundreds of thousands of young American Jews visit Israel on pilgrimage tours known as “Birthright Israel.” The program is funded by a partnership between private philanthropists and the government of Israel and, as of 2010, had arranged trips of the combined value above half-billion dollars (Kelner, 2010). The figures may be lower for other regions but still likely add up to significant numbers and generate much business for local economies. In addition to the economic side, roots tourism has also been shown to improve subjective well-being and quality of life (Backer, 2019; Sie, Pegg, & Phelan, 2021).

Given the size of the industry, it is not surprising that a large body of research has been devoted to studying the phenomenon of roots tourism. Several major research journals have devoted entire special issues to roots tourism, such as *The Journal of Tourism Studies* (Issue 1 in Volume 6 published 1995); *Tourism Geographies* (Issue 3 in Volume 15 published in 2000); *International Migration Review* (Issue 4 in Volume 27 published in 2003); *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Issue 7 in Volume 33 published in 2007); *Mobilities* (Issue 4 in Volume 6, published in 2011), *Tourism Analysis* (Issue 18 in Volume 3, published in 2013); *Tourism Culture & Communication* (Issue 15 in Volume 3, published 2015).

Notably, the phenomenon of roots tourism attracts attention not only from different countries but also from a variety of disciplines. In addition to tourism and hospitality scholars, roots tourism has been a popular topic of research in geography (e.g., Abramson, 2017; Iorio & Corsale, 2012), anthropology (e.g., Maruyama, Weber, & Stronza, 2010; Skipper & Davidson, 2018), marketing (e.g., Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2002), and other disciplines.

While scholars from various disciplines and of many nationalities have contributed significantly to the quantity and quality of the literature on the topic, such diversity and dispersion have also resulted in inconsistencies, or even chaos, in the terminology used to describe the phenomenon. In different publications, the phenomenon has been referred to by different names, such as roots tourism, diaspora tourism, nostalgia tourism, ancestral tourism, legacy tourism, ethnic tourism, sentimental tourism, nostalgic tourism, genealogy tourism, heritage tourism, and this is only a few examples. As we detail further, we have identified a total of 41 different terms that have been used interchangeably – and often incorrectly. The terminology discrepancies create a great deal of confusion and impede navigation and integration of the literature on the topic.

The absence of a common language and the chaotic and inconsistent use of terms and labels in the literature on roots tourism have long been recognized, and multiple authors have called for a unification of the terminology and definitions (Birtwistle, 2007; Ray & McCain, 2012; Santos & Yan, 2010). For example, in her 2013 paper on what she called “genealogical tourism,” Birtwistle suggested that the term “ancestral tourism” might be a better general term for the use in future publications, as it is broader than “genealogical tourism.” However, no attempts have been undertaken to systematize and standardize the terminology beyond suggestions for the umbrella terms for the phenomenon as a whole. Unfortunately, while the calls to action are prompted by a recognition of the problem and the desire to address it, a comprehensive plan for moving forward is impossible without an in-depth review of the issue. There is a need for not only an agreed-upon umbrella term, but also a schema for the entire nomological network, including terms of the different facets, types, and components of roots tourism.

A unified, universal, agreed-upon terminology is not only one of the attributes of an established mature field of studies, but a necessary foundation upon which the discipline can

develop. The absence of common terminology makes it impossible to identify studies that explore the same phenomenon, as different authors could be calling it different names. Conversely, the same name could label different phenomena, creating a false impression that they address the same issue, only further adding to the confusion. Unlike natural sciences with their long-agreed standard terminology and notation, such as physics or chemistry, some branches of social sciences are still lagging in their attempts to develop a “common language.” The challenge is particularly acute in the areas of research that interest scholars from multiple disciplines. Research on tourism and hospitality is one of these disciplinary crossroads, where sociologists, economists, geographers, and marketing scholars meet. Sadly, they often remain oblivious to the work of their colleagues from other disciplines, and the lack of unified terminology does not aid the exchange of ideas and literature integration.

The present study addresses the problem of terminology inconsistencies in research on roots tourism and suggests a way forward. Our goals are (1) to review and systemize the many different, often conflicting, redundant, and overlapping names of roots tourism; provide a framework for analyzing the issue; (2) explore and explain the subtle differences and overlaps in the meaning of different terms; and, most importantly; and (3) provide recommendations for the most suitable terms for the different types, aspects, and facets of roots tourism for future research. We hope that our map of terms and definitions will help future researchers navigate and make sense of the disparate bodies of literature on roots tourism and move forward “speaking the same language” of unified and harmonized terminology.

Of note, in the absence of one agreed-upon umbrella term for the phenomenon, in this paper, we use “roots tourism” as an umbrella term. We acknowledge that this choice is somewhat arbitrary, but we needed a name for the subject of our study, and “roots tourism” appeared to be the most suitable for this task. Additional arguments in favor of the term “roots tourism” as a generic term for this subject of inquiry are provided further in the paper.

The remainder of the paper is structured in the following manner. First, we describe the criteria we used to locate relevant literature and compile our list of terms that have been used to describe the different aspects and components of roots tourism. Next, we analyze the differences in terminology by discipline, geography, and the time of the publication. Based on the analysis, we integrate and systematize the terminology and provide a two-dimensional map that shows how the 41 terms relate to one another and differ in their meaning. Lastly, we provide guidelines and recommendations for selecting proper terms in future research and publications.

2. Literature search and sample

To provide a foundation for our review and model development, we conducted a thorough search for literature that meet the following criteria: (1) papers in peer-reviewed journals, books, book chapters, or doctoral thesis/dissertations, where (2) roots tourism was the main subject of the study. We also (3) limited our review to only publications in English, as it is already hard to make sense of the many conflicting terms in one language, and the complexities and confusion introduced by translation would have infinitely complicated the task. We imposed no restrictions on when the studies were published and, in fact, attempted to cover as wide a time frame as possible to allow for an analysis of how the use of the different terms has evolved over time. Eventually, our literature collection spun about five decades, with the studies that met our inclusion criteria published between 1968 and 2021.

To locate all relevant publications on roots tourism, we started with a search in Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus databases. To ensure that we locate all relevant publications, we used multiple keywords, namely: roots tourism, root tourism, diaspora tourism, ethnic tourism, VFR tourism, ancestral tourism, nostalgia tourism, genealogy tourism, legacy tourism, sentimental tourism, ethnic tourism, and homeland tourism. The initial search identified 11,219 publications that mentioned one of our search terms anywhere in the text.

A review of the titles, publication outlets, and abstracts revealed that the vast majority of these studies did not meet our inclusion criteria. Most of these publications only mentioned one of our search terms in the body of the text, but roots tourism was not their primary object of inquiry or discussion, and some were conference proceedings or popular press articles or were published in languages other than English. However, based on this initial screening, 1,154 publications, of which 978 were available for full-text download, appeared relevant to our review. Unfortunately, based on a closer analysis of these full-text publications, most were disqualified, mainly because, again, either they only mentioned one of our search terms, but it was not the main object of research, or the terms were used in a different meaning. For example, many studies were excluded because they talked about “ethnic tourism” or “nostalgia tourism” not in the sense of “roots tourism,” but as travel to exotic cultural locations, such as places of the habitat of indigenous tribes or peoples or adventures in general, not related to one's roots (Kouchi, Nezhad, & Kiani, 2018; Wong, Ma, & Xiong, 2020). Likewise, VFR tourism (visiting friends and relatives) may refer to visits to one's own country of origin or countries to which the traveler has no ancestral ethnic connection (Yousuf & Backer, 2015). We had to disqualify a significant portion of studies on VFR because they did not fit our definition of roots tourism, as detailed in Fig. 1 (e.g., Tran, Moore, & Shone, 2018; Wang, Shen, & Ye, 2020).

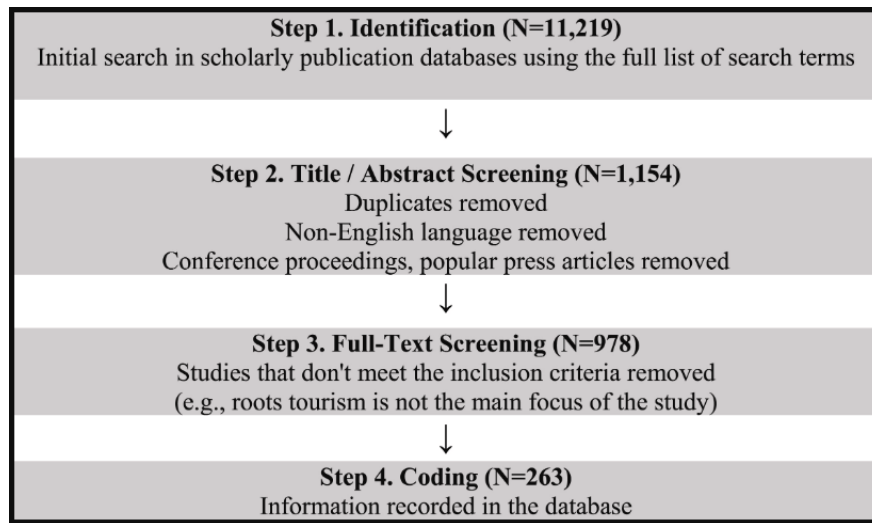


Fig. 1. Literature search and selection process.

Notably, a review of the papers in our initial pool provided references to more publications on the topic that our initial search missed. Furthermore, this review revealed several other names for roots tourism or its components not included in our initial list of search terms, so we went back and conducted additional searches using these new terms. Most of the papers using these new terms were already in our database because most papers use multiple labels for roots tourism and thus

were identified based on our original search, but were new unique suitable publications that met our search criteria.

Table 1. Publications included in the review, by publication outlet.

Publication Outlet	# of Publications
Articles in peer-reviewed journals, total:	197
Annals of Tourism Research	15
Tourism Management	15
Current Issues In Tourism	12
Journal of Heritage Tourism	10
Tourism Analysis	8
Tourism Culture & Communication	7
Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	6
Population, Space and Place	6
Tourism Geographies	5
International Journal of Tourism Research	4
Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management	4
Journal of Travel Research	4
Global Networks	3
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	3
Anatolia, An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research	2
Canadian Foreign Policy Studies	2
Ethnic and Racial Studies	2
International Journal of Tourism Anthropology	2
Journal of Contemporary African Studies	2
Mobilities	2
Other journals with 1 paper per journal	83
Books	8
Book chapters	39
Theses	19
Grant Total	263
Publication Outlet	# of Publications

After several rounds of searching and deleting duplicates and studies that did not meet our selection criteria, our final pool included 263 English-language publications where roots tourism was the main subject of study. Of those, 197 were articles in peer-reviewed journals, eight were books, 39 were book chapters, and 19 were theses. Table 1 provides a breakdown by publication outlet.

We intended to keep our review comprehensive and, thus, made the decision not to limit our pool to a subset of the most prestigious journals representative of a particular field. As a result, our pool contained a collection of articles from 97 peer-reviewed journals. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the journals by discipline. Please note, the breakdown is by the discipline targeted by the journal, as per the journal's editorial policy statement. We also categorized the books and theses into disciplines by the departmental affiliation of their authors and book chapters by the central theme of the edited volumes in which they appeared.

Table 2. Breakdown of the publications by discipline.

Discipline	# of Papers
Tourism and Hospitality	158
Anthropology	28
Diaspora studies	15
Economics/Business	10
Geography	13
African studies	4
Marketing	7
Other	8
Multidisciplinary	20
TOTAL	263

The review of the 263 publications yielded 41 terms used to denote roots tourism or its types or components. Table 3 provides a complete list with an approximate number of hits returned by Google Scholar for each term and the number of studies that met our inclusion criteria. Later on, we will return to this table to discuss these terms and their grouping more in-depth.

Most of the authors of these publications were affiliated with universities in the USA (25%), the United Kingdom (18%), Australia (7%), China (6%), Canada (4%), Israel (3%), Italy (3%), South Africa (3%), New Zealand (2%), France (2%), Poland (2%), Ukraine (2%), Netherlands (2%), Belgium, Sweden and Germany (1,5% each). The remaining 16% were from 32 different countries, with one or two authors per country.

In terms of the travel destination countries, 33% of the studies focused on roots tourism to the European countries. Of those, 12% were to the U.K, 5% Germany, 4% Ukraine, 3% Poland, and the remaining 9% were to destinations spread across the rest of Europe. Other studies looked at roots tourism to destinations outside Europe, such as China (10%), Israel (8%), Iran, India, and Turkey (each 2% of the studies), and Japan, Armenia, South Korea, Pakistan, and Singapore, UAE, Thailand, and Indonesia (each 1% of the studies). About 15% of the studies explore roots tourism in Africa, with the most popular countries being Ghana (7%), Gambia (3%), South Africa (2%); and 5% to Latin America, with Mexico, Brasil, Jamaica, Cuba, and Guana, accounting for about 1% of the publications each. Research on roots tourism to Australia and New Zealand accounted for about 2% combined. Roots tourism to the United States and Canada accounted for just about 1% of all publications. The remaining 11% of the studies did not focus on a particular country of origin or destination but provided a general or global review of the issue or studied roots tourism in the multi-country context.

Table 3. The term ratings along the relatedness and emotional response dimensions.

Term	G-Scholar Hits	Included	Relatedness	Emotional Response
UMBRELLA				
Roots tourism	~1300	43	1-4	1-4
Diaspora tourism	~1040	48	1-4	1-4
VPO visiting places of origin	8	1	1-4	1-4
Homeland tourism	~320	6	1-4	1-4
Diaspora homeland tourism	~15	2	1-4	1-4
Ethnic tourism	~9400 ^b	8	1-2	2-3
Heritage tourism	~4500 ^b	9	1-3	2-3
Sentimental tourism	~160	6	2-4	3-4
Diaspora heritage tourism	~40 ^b	1	1-3	2-3
PERSONAL-EMOTIONAL				
Personal memory tourism	~60	1	4	4
Homesick tourism	~60	2	4	4
Nostalgia tourism ^a	~500	16	4	4
Migrant tourism	~250	2	4	4
VHFP visiting home and familiar places	~90	1	4	1-4
Remembrance tourism ^a	~70 ^b	2	1-4	2-4
Memory tourism ^a	~780	2	1-4	2-4
HISTORICAL EMOTIONAL				
Slavery heritage tourism	~100	2	1-2	2-4
Slavery tourism	~140	6	1-2	2-4
Cemetery tourism ^a	~190 ^b	2	2-3	3-4
Yugonostalgic tourism	~40	0	1-3	2-4
Pilgrimage tourism	~4300 ^b	2	1-2	3-4
Holocaust tourism	~985	7	1-2	3-4
Birthright tourism	~300	5	1-2	3-4

(Continued on the next page)

Table 3. (continued)

Term	G-Scholar Hits	Included	Relatedness	Emotional Response
PERSONAL PRACTICAL				
Medical tourism	~1400 ^b	1	4	1
HISTORIC PRACTICAL	0			
IDENTITY				
Existential tourism	~190	2	1-4	3
Existential heritage tourism	~10 ^b	2	1-4	2-3
Personal heritage tourism	~100	2	1-4	2-3
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT				
Battlefield tourism	~2000 ^b	1		
Language tourism	~1200 ^b	1	1-2 1-3	2 2-3
LIVING FAMILY				
Family reunion tourism	~15	3		
VFR visiting friends and relatives	~1000	28	3	4
Wedding tourism	~440 ^b	1	3-4	1-4
ANCESTORS			3-4	1-3
Lineage tourism	10	0		
Genealogy tourism	~275	16	2-3	2-3
Ancestral tourism	~200	11	2-3	2-3
Legacy tourism	~500	5	2-3	2-3
Family history tourism	~25	0	2-3	2-3
Family memory tourism	1 ^b	1	3	3
Dark family tourism	~100 ^b	1	3	3
Phoenix tourism	~200 ^b	1	3	4
No term used		11	3-4	4
Lineage tourism	10	0		
Total	263			

^a Used sometimes in the context of personal or historical (e.g., personal nostalgia vs. historical nostalgia) and thus could fit in both Personal Emotional and Historical Emotional groups.

^b Terms that may have multiple meanings and can be used in the context of roots tourism and general or other types of tourism, were used in combination with “roots tourism” and “diaspora tourism” to refine the search.

3. Types of inconsistencies in the terminology

Our review revealed that at least 41 different terms had been used to label what we refer to here as roots tourism, and the way they have been used could only be described as chaotic. There appears to be no system and standards in how these terms have been applied. The following inconsistencies are most noticeable:

No agreed-upon name for the phenomenon at large. As noted earlier, “roots tourism” is one of many umbrella terms used to denote the travel to places of one's own origin or places related to one's family or ancestral history. The challenge is that several other terms are also popular, and all of them are used interchangeably, often in the same sentence. For example, as noted by Hogan (2019), “roots tourism [is] also sometimes called legacy tourism or diaspora tourism” (p. 140). The lack of agreement on the phenomenon's name makes it quite challenging to search for relevant studies on the topic. There is always a risk that entire segments of the literature will be omitted due to the differences in terminologies. Likewise, the authors who would like to contribute to this body of literature are often unsure how they should refer to the subject of their research because it is unclear what search words future readers will use to locate their study. Perhaps this is why many authors use multiple terms to improve the searchability of their, as in this quote from Ray and McCain (2012), “The message highlights the emerging reality that many Americans engage in ‘ancestral’ (or “legacy,” “roots” or “family heritage”) travel. All present-day legacy (or “ancestral,” “diaspora,” “roots,” etc.) tourists need to get to that distant land ...” (p. 977). It is an impediment to the progress in the field that the authors must resort to such inefficient and often ineffective solutions.

Different names for the same subtype of the phenomenon. Just like there is no single name for the phenomenon as a whole, different terms are often used to denote various types or aspects of roots tourism. For example, consider travel to places of one's ancestral origin. That is, places that the traveler's distant relatives are from, but the traveler was born elsewhere. “Ancestral” tourism appears to be the most suitable name, but many other terms are used to denote this type of roots tourism. As Gaudry (2007) notes, “throughout the literature, ancestral tourism has been categorized differently, including genealogical tourism, legacy tourism, personal heritage tourism, diaspora tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, and roots tourism” (p. 18). Again, the lack of agreement on what each type the phenomenon should be called creates confusion and impedes progress in this area of research.

Same name for different aspects of the phenomenon. Just like multiple names are often used to denote the same construct, the same name is often used to label different constructs. Many of the 41 terms actually refer to specific types of roots tourism, and these differences must be recognized. Yet, these terms are often used interchangeably, leading to a loss of essential differences in their meanings. For example, as Marschall (2015) notes, “in the touristic, journalistic and academic literature, the homesick tourism phenomenon is generally conflated with diasporic roots tourism” (p. 876). One of the purposes of this paper is to explain these subtle differences in meaning and provide guidelines when and which aspect of roots tourism one or another term is more suitable and precise.

Same name for different phenomena. Sometimes the same term is used to denote completely different types of travel, one related to roots tourism and the other referring to a very different kind of travel. This type of confusion was especially problematic when we were searching for the literature for this review, as it resulted in hits that were completely unrelated to the topic of

our interest. For example, as mentioned earlier, the term “ethnic tourism” is often used not only to denote travel to places of the traveler's ethnic origin, and thus studies that used the term were of interest in our search. However, the term “ethnic tourism” is also often used in the context of visiting lands of other ethnic groups, often exotic tribes or peoples. In this case, one has no personal connection to these places. The traveler is not looking to explore his or her origin or roots but instead wants to learn about other cultures (Dzhaman, 2016; King, 1994; Tomczewska-Popowycz, 2016). Separating the two bodies of literature caused a significant loss of time, slowing down our progress – and other scholars of roots tourism, undoubtedly, often face the same problem.

Combined terms: Adding to the confusion, some authors use combinations of terms. There is nothing wrong with this approach per se, but it appears the combined terms only provide unnecessary repetition. For example, the terms “diasporic roots tourism” (Iorio & Corsale, 2012) or “diaspora heritage tourism” (Huang, Haller, & Ramshaw, 2013; Lev & Mittelberg, 2008; Skipper & Davidson, 2018) are often used precisely in the same sense as the general “roots” or “diaspora” tourism, and the additional word in the term does not sharpen or clarify the meaning. To be fair, some of these term combinations could add clarity, as is in the case of “diasporic VFR tourism” (Wagner, 2015). Recall that “VFR” stands for visiting friends and relatives. “Diasporic” implies that, in this case, visiting friends and family involves international travel. Unfortunately, more often than not, the combined terms introduce unnecessary redundancies and contamination of the term's meaning.

No term. Ironically, about 4% of the studies in our sample that clearly explored the issue of roots tourism did not use any of the special terms for the subject and instead described it in general terms or used names that lacked specificity, such as “return visits,” “Chinese tourism,” “ethnic pilgrimages,” “religious obligations to travel,” or “exploration of place attachment of X generation and X diaspora” (Bruner, 1996; Li & Chan, 2018; Tie, Holden, & Yu Park, 2015; Vathi & King, 2011; H.-C.; Wu, Chang, & Wu, 2019; Y.-F.; Wu, Hannam, & Xu, 2018).

4. Terminology differences by geography and over time

After compiling our literature pool, we proceeded with analyses aimed at identifying trends or systemic differences in the terminology. Our first intuition was that perhaps the existence of a multitude of names for roots tourism was due to the fragmentation of the literature across disciplines, world regions, or evolution of the terminology over time. Could the differences exist because, for example, geographers and anthropologists or scholars in the U.S. and scholars in the E.U. use different names for the same phenomenon? This would indicate not a “messy” terminology but different standards in different fields, which is a whole other kind of problem. Alas, our analysis revealed no apparent trends. A chaotic use of multiple overlapping and conflicting terms and the absence of standardized terminology is evident in every field of study on every continent and at every period.

First, we analyzed the relative preferences for different terms across different disciplines. Table 4 provides counts for each of the ten most popular terms in each area of studies, as well as their relative percentages. If a publication used multiple terms, we included only the main or most frequently-used term in our counts. As can be seen, no discipline has a single agreed-upon term. The diversity of terminology is primarily a function of the number of publications in each field. For example, the Tourism and Hospitality journals accounted for most publications, about 60% of the total, and this is where we see the most different terms used. Notably, no single term was strongly favored in any of the areas of research. Even the most popular terms, such as “roots” or

Table 4. A relative popularity of different terms, by area of studies.

	Tourism/Hospitality	Anthropology	Diaspora Studies	Geography	Economics/Business	Marketing	Other disciplines	Multidisciplinary
Diaspora Tourism	31/20.0%	5/16.7%	3/23.1%	1/7.1%	1/14.3%	3/42.9%	2/16.7%	5/27.8%
Roots Tourism	18/11.6%	11/36.7%	3/23.1%	2/14.3%	0/0%	0/0%	3/25%	6/33.3%
VFR ^a Tourism	22/14.2%	1/3.3%	0/0%	3/21.4%	0/0%	1/14.3%	1/8.3%	0/0%
Genealogy Tourism	13/8.4%	0/0%	1/7.7%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/11.1%
Nostalgia Tourism	10/6.5%	1/3.3%	0/0%	1/7.1%	1/14.3%	0/0%	2/16.7%	1/5.6%
Ancestral Tourism	7/4.5%	1/3.3%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/28.6%	1/8.3%	0/0%
Heritage Tourism	7/4.5%	1/3.3%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/8.3%	0/0%
Ethnic Tourism	7/4.5%	1/3.3%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%
Sentimental Tourism	2/1.3%	0/0%	0/0%	3/21.4%	1/14.3%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%
Homeland Tourism	2/1.3%	3/10%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/8.3%	0/0%
Other Terms	39/23.2%	8/20%	6/46.2%	4/28.6%	4/57.1%	1/14.3%	1/8.3%	6/22.2%
Total	158/100%	32/100%	13/100%	14/100%	7/100%	7/100%	12/100%	20/100%

a VFR – visiting friends and relatives

“diaspora” tourism, generally accounted for only about 20–30%, while other terms were used the rest of the time.

The only minor differences we observed were the following. In the Tourism and Hospitality journals, “diaspora tourism” was the most commonly-used term, used as the primary term in 20% of the publications, followed by “roots tourism” (11.6%) and “VFR tourism” (14.2%). In contrast, Anthropology journals preferred the term “roots tourism” 36.7% of the time, while “diaspora tourism” was used only in 16.7% of the publications. Generally, the terms “roots” and “diaspora” tourism are among the most popular in most disciplines, but there are some exceptions. For example, in Geography journals, the terms “sentimental” and “VFR” were most popular, albeit each accounted only for 21.4%. Also, there appears to be a strong preference for the terms “diaspora” and “ancestral” tourism in Marketing, but with only seven papers published in these journals, the reliability of this observation is suspect.

There appear to be no apparent differences across geographies. We compared the use of different terms by authors from different countries. The regional comparison revealed that the terms “roots” and “diaspora” tourism were relatively widespread in all parts of the world, accounting for about 15–30% each. The term “roots” was the most popular in North America and western Europe, while “diaspora” was found to be relatively more prevalent in Africa and Asia, and both were equally popular in South America. Eastern European researchers slightly prefer the term “sentimental,” and, notably, it is rarely used elsewhere. Researchers from the Middle East and Australia favor the term “VFR,” although “diaspora” is almost as popular in these regions. The term “legacy” tourism appears to be unique to North America, “ancestral” to western Europe, and “existential” to Asia, although it is only in the third position on each list.

We also conducted a regional comparison by the country of destination of the trips described in the publications. Our analysis identified the following trends. The term “birthright” tourism is used only in the context of travel to Israel (Abramson, 2017; Kelner, 2010), as well as the term “Holocaust tourism” (Podoshen, 2017) relates to pilgrimage travel to either the sites of former concentration camps in Germany and Poland (Thurnell-Read, 2009) or Holocaust museums, such as the United States Holocaust (Hasian & Marouf, 2004). Likewise, sadly, “slavery” tourism (either “slavery diaspora tourism” or “slavery heritage tourism”) is mainly used in the context of roots tourism to Africa (Baarle, 2014; Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015). Such regionalization is not surprising as both terms denote very distinct types of roots tourism specific to particular regions of the world.

We also checked if certain terms were more prevalent during different periods but could not detect any apparent trends. The only notable observations are that the term “VFR” appears to be the oldest, appearing in the literature as far back as the 1960s (Lickorish, 1968). The term “ethnic” tourism was quite popular in the 1990s (Ostrowski, 1991) but was almost phased out by the decade's end. This was likely done to avoid confusion. As we explained earlier, this term may refer to both visiting places of one's own origin or visiting places that are home to exotic ethnic groups or tribes. Otherwise, multiple terms appear to have been used interchangeably throughout the past three decades, with none accounting for more than 30% at any point in time.

The conclusion is that the existence of the many overlapping terms is not a matter of systemic differences in how roots tourism is referred to in different disciplines or regions of the world or how it has been labeled in the past versus now. No matter how we grouped the papers in our sample, we could observe a consistent use of one agreed-upon term to describe the phenomenon of roots tourism or its subtypes. At all times and in all disciplines and regions of the world, multiple terms have always been in use, with even the most popular accounting for only

about 20–30%. Clearly, it is not a matter of researchers from different fields of study or regions not talking to each other and using their own terminologies, but instead, there appears to be a ubiquitous lack of agreement on terminology around the topic.

5. Systemizing the terminology

5.1. Review of the definitions

To systemize and reconcile these differences, we proceeded with analyzing the term definitions provided in our literature collection. About 42% of the publications offered formal definitions of their main terms, another 48% provided general explanations that could be construed as definitions, and the remaining 10% provided no definitions or explanations whatsoever, typically implying or assuming that the meaning of these terms is common knowledge and, thus, no definition is necessary. About 30% of the publications defined or explained multiple terms or provided a single definition for multiple terms, essentially treating the terms as substitutes.

Almost always, the authors referred to other studies when defining their terms, sometimes directly quoting, but more often providing a collection of paraphrased quotes combined into a new rendering of the definition. We attempted to trace a common origin for the many definitions of the most common labels of roots tourism, but it seemed impossible. The network of references appeared random, and we could not identify one or a few seminal studies that gave rise to the myriad terms and definitions.

After deleting duplicates, our collection contained 203 unique, albeit often similarly-worded definitions or explanations of the meaning of the 41 names of roots tourism. We then carefully analyzed each definition, trying to discern patterns and commonalities for each term. It is beyond the scope and purpose of the present study to provide a detailed review of those definitions – we are working on a separate review paper that will address this issue. Here, we present the commonalities apparent in all reviewed definitions of roots tourism. Three common themes were presented in almost all of the 203 definitions, regardless of the specific term they defined. Namely, all of them mentioned (1) international travel (2) to the place of one's own, family, ancestral, or ethnic origin (3) that invokes an emotional response, which could be construed as the foundation, as the necessary attributes of the phenomenon as a whole, or its types and parts.

Other components of the definitions varied greatly, and it was our goal to systemize these differences to understand better the different shades in the meaning of each of these terms. If all of these terms have the same definition, maybe they are all interchangeable, and all we have to do is choose one and use it from now on. Conversely, if each term denotes a different type or component of roots tourism, maybe all of them must stay in the literature, but we need to explain those differences so that the terminology can be standardized and used universally.

5.2. The typologies of travel

Following our analysis of the definitions, we also conducted a broader overview of travel typologies to see how the term “roots tourism” fits in this larger nomological network. One of the earliest formal classifications for reasons to travel was provided by Crompton (1979), who suggested seven psychological ‘push’ motives (escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships and facilitation of social interaction) and two cultural ‘pull’ motives (novelty and

education). None of these motives seem to be directly related to roots tourism, although exploration and evaluation of self could potentially include travel to places of familiar or ancestral significance.

Shortly after, Pearce (1988) used Maslow's Maslow (1954) hierarchy of needs to provide a classification of motivations for travel which he presented as the travel career ladder (TCL). Not unlike Maslow's model, the TLC is also presented as a pyramid with the travel related to satisfying physical needs (relaxation and bodily reconstitution) at the wide base, followed by progressively more rare travel related to satisfying emotional needs (romance, adventure, spiritualism, and nostalgia), cultural needs (learning about other cultures as well as about one's own cultural heritage), interpersonal needs (travel to visit friends and family to maintain existing or developing new relationships), and status and prestige travel (travel that results in attention and admiration and self-challenge). Again, roots tourism is not presented here as a separate category, but rather, it could fall into travel related to emotional, cultural, and interpersonal needs.

The official classification of types of travel provided by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010) is simpler and differentiates between two broad categories: personal and business/professional travel. Personal travel is further split into several subcategories, including travel related to holidays, leisure and recreation, visiting friends and relatives, education and training, health and medical care, religion/pilgrimage, shopping, and transit. Business travel includes trips related to attending meetings/conferences/congresses, trade fairs/exhibitions, giving lectures/concerts/shows/plays, and promoting/purchasing/selling/buying goods or services. Here again, roots tourism is not listed as a separate category but could be part of personal travel related to visiting friends and family and religion/pilgrimage.

Lastly, McKercher (2016) recently attempted to provide the complete taxonomy of travel. He identified 90 tourism product classes, grouped into 27 product families, grouped in turn into five need families. The five need families include travel for pleasure (food, leisure, sports), personal quests (personal history, religious, medical/wellness, learning), human endeavors (heritage, arts, museums), nature (hunting, fishing, skiing, climbing), and business travel (business meetings, conferences, conventions, exhibitions). Again, roots tourism is not a separate family or class of travel, but it could be part of travel for pleasure (travel to family events such as weddings, family reunions, funerals, or meetings with friends, such as reunions with childhood or college friends), personal quests (exploration of personal history, genealogy, places of personal memories, or travel for religious purposes such as pilgrimage and sacred travel), and human endeavors related heritage and dark history, which could include personal or ancestral heritage and history.

While the general classifications of types of travel provided above do not separate roots tourism into a separate category, there are several taxonomies of heritage and nostalgia-related travel. For example, Poria, Butler, and Airey (2003) provide a taxonomy of heritage tourism based on the traveler's relationship to and interest in the destination. They differentiate four levels of such trips, including travel to (1) heritage sites that the traveler is not even aware of their significance, (2) sites whose significance is known to the traveler but the traveler does not care about it, (3) the traveler is aware and is interested in the significance of the heritage site, but it is not related to the traveler's own heritage and (4) the traveler understands the significance and is interested in the heritage site, and the location has a direct personal or ancestral connection.

When it comes to nostalgia-motivated trips, in their recent study, Adie and de Bernardi (2020) argue that such trips could be placed on a continuum between endo-nostalgia (lived experience) at one end and exo-nostalgia (cultural memory) at the other, and an intermediate form is meso-nostalgia. Shi, Bettache, Zhang, and Xue (2021) take it further and differentiate between

two reasons for nostalgia. The first is genuine nostalgia that develops based on personal memories and understandings of the events. The other is artificial nostalgia which is the emotional feeling related to places or events that were created by deliberate manipulations via advertisement and other consumerism and fashion influences. It is similar to MacCarthy's (2021) classification of dark tourism that differentiates between three push motives for pilgrimage to commemorative destinations, namely obligation (cultural/national), association (institutional/family), and individuation (curiosity/knowledge), and one pull motive, manipulation (response to marketing).

Lastly, roots tourism clearly implies a connection between the traveler and the destination, so the place attachment theory is relevant in this context. As detailed by Low and Altman (1992), the person can be connected to a geographic location by genealogy (links to family and places of origin), narrative (links created through storytelling), loss and destruction (links forged through disasters or migration), economic (places property ownership or workplaces), celebratory (links formed through participation in cultural events like concerts, religious ceremony or sports) and cosmological (links formed through religious pilgrimage or connection to sacred religious sites). Importantly, multiple factors could be overlapping when the attachments to places are formed.

5.3. The dimensions of roots tourism

None of the reviewed typologies of travel allowed us to systemize the many labels of roots tourism. However, the reviews of definitions of roots tourism and the existing typologies of travel provided the foundation for developing a typology of travel related to roots tourism. Two themes emerged based on our analysis: (1) the proximity of the relationship between the traveler and destination and (2) the degree of emotions the travel elicits.

Accordingly, we posit that the terminology used to denote the types of roots tourism could be classified and mapped along two dimensions: (1) personal relatedness and (2) emotional response. We define each dimension as the following:

Personal relatedness is the degree of personal connection of the traveler to the destination. While it is a continuous dimension, it helps to divide into four broad segments:

- 1) **Ethnicity:** The lineage to the destination could not be reliably traced anymore to a specific distant relative, but the traveler knows that at least some of her/his distant ancestors came from that country and considers her/himself part of the ethnic group from the region of trip's destination.
- 2) **Ancestors:** Separation by more than two generations. The traveler has not personally met anyone in the family who was born in the destination region, but knows from family archives or stories which specific distant ancestors were from there. The lineage can still be reliably traced, but the traveler was born after these ancestors died and never heard first-hand accounts about the destination.
- 3) **Family:** Trips to destinations that the traveler is connected to through immediate family. One or two generations separate the traveler from the destination, such as a person traveling to the country that her/his parents or grandparents are from, but the traveler was born elsewhere.
- 4) **Myself:** Trips to a destination that the traveler is from personally—for example, an emigrant traveling back to the country where s/he grew up.

Emotional response is the degree of emotional reaction the trip invokes in the traveler. Again, for illustration purposes, we divide the dimension into four segments:

- 1) Convenience: The trip invokes no emotions whatsoever. It is just a trip taken for the reason of convenience or need. It could be a business trip to a country the traveler does not particularly care about, but one where the traveler may have an easier time doing business due to family connections or language proficiency.
- 2) Cultural enrichment: The emotional response to the destination is moderate, and the trip is prompted mainly by curiosity, a desire to learn more about the culture of the people who live there. The emotional response is similar to that triggered by any international travel with no particular sense of importance or overwhelming emotions. It is just like a trip to explore any other location, but the traveler can trace his/her own origin or ancestral lineage. This type of travel may involve observation or participation in cultural festivals, celebrations, historical reenactments, or cultural immersion trips.
- 3) Identity: Places that the traveler sees as part of his/her identity. The destination may not trigger a strong emotional response, but the traveler feels a personal connection to it, nonetheless. For example, the traveler may feel that her/his ethnic affiliation is an important part of who she/he is, so s/he travels to the land of this ethnic group to better understand his/her origin. The emotional response is primarily limited to the sense of importance and significance, but not necessary of overwhelming joy or sadness.
- 4) Nostalgia: Travel to destinations that the traveler feels very emotional about. The emotions can be positive or negative, such as joy and excitement or sadness and regret invoked by personal memories or national pride or history. The place triggers intense nostalgia, personal or historic. For example, it could be a trip to see a destination that triggers emotional childhood memories or locations of great victories or tragedies of the traveler's family or ethnic group.

5.4. Mapping the meaning of the 41 terms

Next, we proceeded with mapping the meaning of the 40 terms along the two dimensions. First, we carefully reviewed each of the 203 definitions and additionally consulted dictionaries on the meaning and etymology of each word in the 41 terms. Equipped with the results of this research, the authors independently rated each of the 41 terms, using the 4-point scales for personal relatedness and emotional response. The rating was done manually and based on the authors' personal understanding of the definitions and related literature. The averages of these two independent sets of ratings (Table 3) provided the coordinates for each term on our meaning map.

Admittedly, the ratings were affected by some subjective understandings and interpretations of each term, but the two sets of ratings were remarkably consistent. The correlations between the two sets of ratings were 0.94 and 0.86 for the relatedness and emotional response, respectively (based on the middle point for multi-cell ratings; the correlations were almost identical when we used the lower or higher points for the multi-cell ratings). Importantly, 89% of all ratings were identical between the two raters, and in the remaining 11% of the cases, the co-authors' ratings were no more than one point apart, further attesting to the high inter-rater reliability.

Again, we acknowledge that a different set of raters might produce a slightly different mapping, but it is unlikely their ratings of the terms would have differed significantly from ours. In either case, the map represents our best rendition of the meanings of the 41 terms derived from several months of an in-depth study of the literature, a careful comparison of over 203 definitions we found in the 263 papers we reviewed, and additional research on the original meaning and

etymology of each work. Even if imperfect, to our knowledge, this is the first attempt of such a systemic review and classification of these terms.

Fig. 2 provides the results of this initial round of term mapping. As can be seen, the ratings for some terms were represented by ranges as they were found to refer to the phenomenon of tourism in general, while others indicated a specific, often very narrowly-defined, subtype of roots tourism. For example, the terms “roots tourism,” “diaspora tourism,” or “visiting places of origin” were always defined very broadly and, thus, were rated 1–4 and 1–4 on either dimension. These types of trips encompassed travel to destinations of any degree of relatedness to the traveler and any intensity of the emotional response. In contrast, other terms, such as “personal memory” or “homesick” tourism, were rated as 4 and 4 on either dimension, represented by one cell on the 4 × 4 matrix. Based on their definitions, they referred to a particular narrow type of roots tourism corresponding to emotionally-overwhelming travel to a destination that the traveler has a personal connection to.

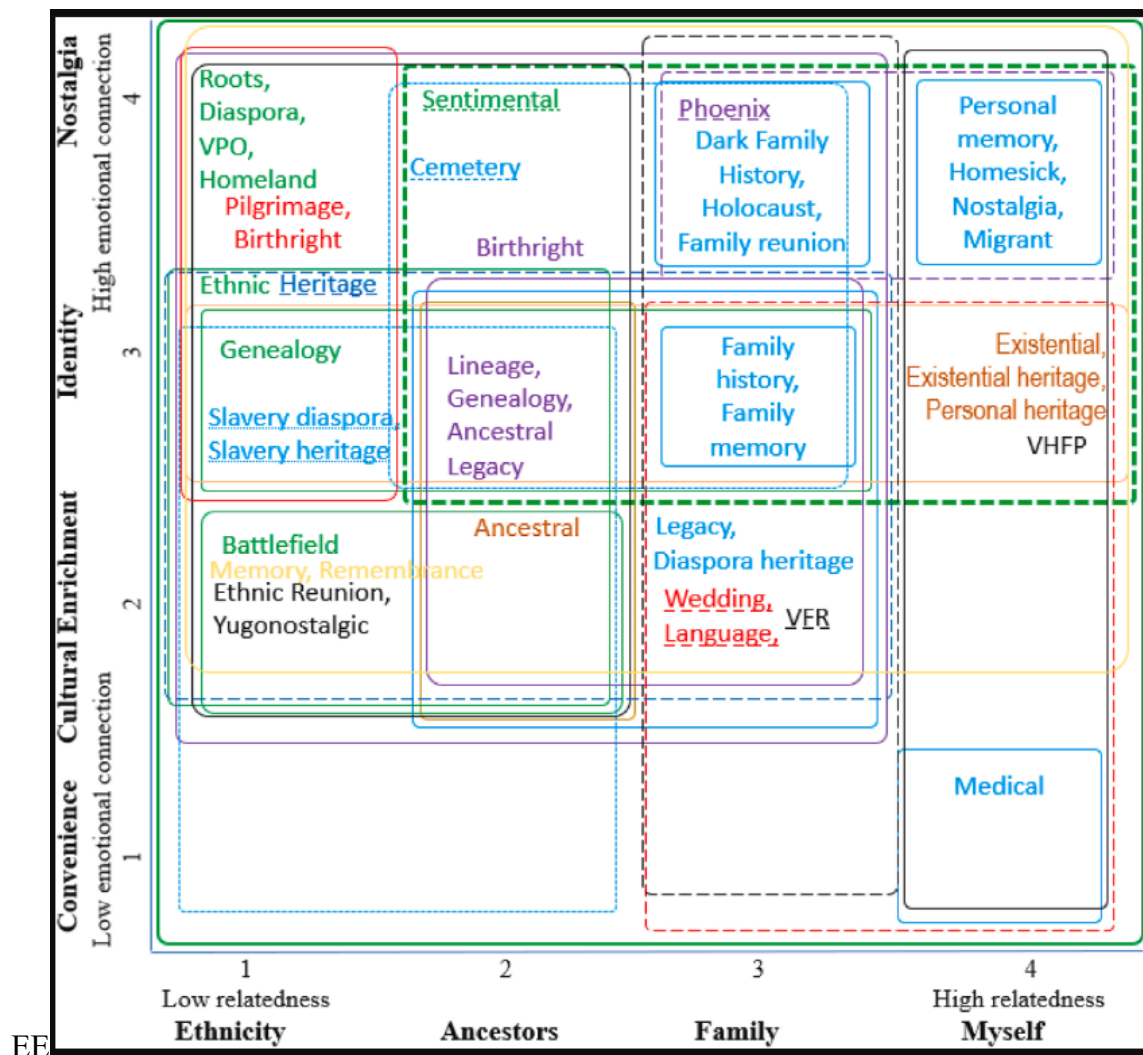


Fig. 2. The meaning map of terminology on roots tourism.

The mapping of the 41 terms (Fig. 2) patently illustrates the chaotic state of the terminology in the literature on roots tourism. Our ratings helped separate the terms by their exact meaning, but

the picture still remained somewhat puzzling due to many overlaps among the terms. Adding to the confusion is the fact that the overlaps are often partial, so the terms are not perfect interchangeable substitutes for one another.

5.5. The conceptual model of the facets of roots tourism

To make sense of the map, we proceeded with trying to produce a simplified theoretical grouping of the terms that differentiate among the different types and facets of roots tourism. Several regions on the map (Fig. 2) appeared particularly crowded, suggesting that these terms refer to the same aspect of the phenomenon. Fig. 3 illustrates our conceptualization of the nine main distinct broad categories of the terms and their underlying facets of roots tourism, namely:

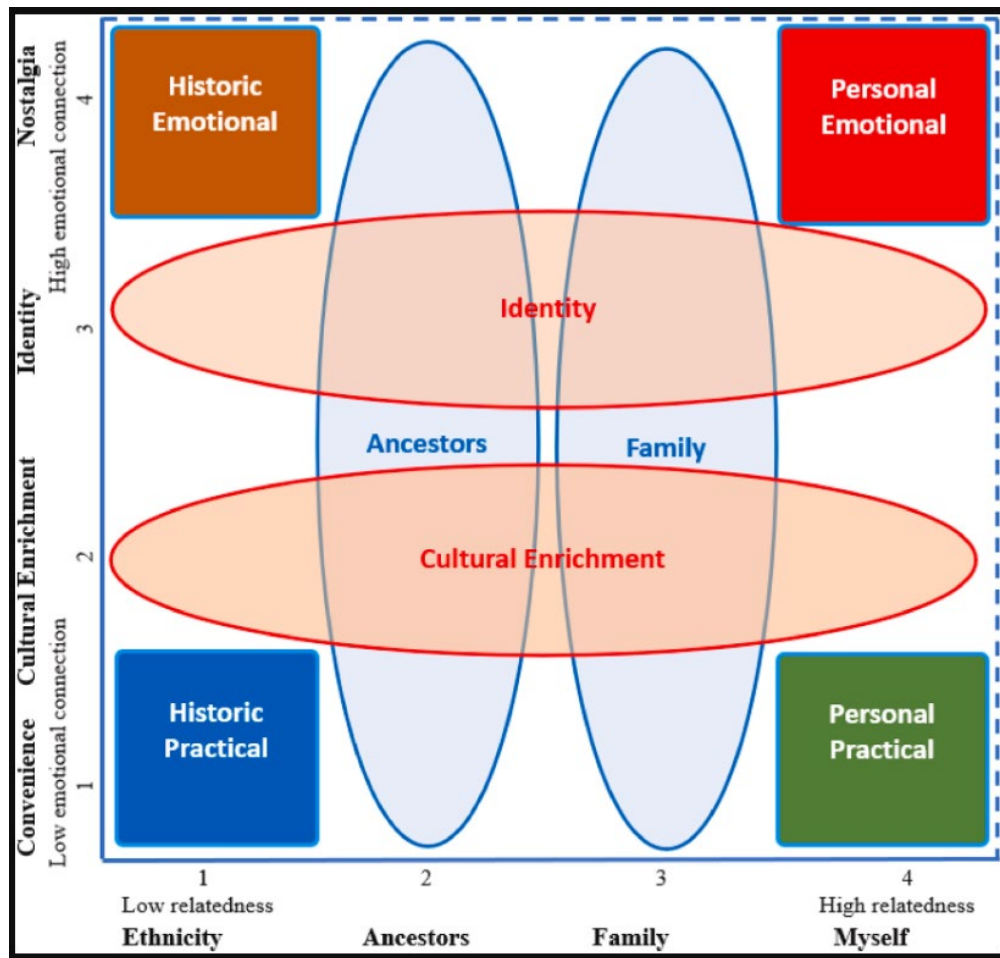


Fig. 3. The conceptual model of the types of roots tourism.

Umbrella Terms: Terms that refer to the phenomenon as a whole. “Roots” and “diaspora” tourism have often been used for this purpose.

Personal Emotional: Terms that refer to the travel to places of personal connection that invoke the highest emotional response. For example, the terms “personal memory” or “homesick” tourism would fall into this category as they refer to destinations that the traveler is from personally, and such trips are very exciting (or perhaps very saddening).

Historic Emotional: Tourism to destinations of great historical significance to the ethnic group of the traveler, typically from a distant past, but still leading to a strong emotional response. For example, “slavery heritage” or “birthright” tourism generally refers to travel to the places of origin of distant ancestors, yet such trips are very emotional.

Personal Practical: Terms that denote trips when the destination is chosen not due to an emotional connection but for convenience, and the traveler visits the destination for personal reasons. “Medical” or “leisure” tourism could refer to this type of travel, when the traveler chooses to receive medical services or go on vacation to the country of her/his origin to satisfy personal needs and because it is cheaper and the traveler may know the local language or knows someone who can host the traveler during the trip.

Historic Practical: Terms that refer to trips to destinations that the traveler is connected to only by ethnicity but cannot trace a connection through known relatives or ancestors, and when such trips are not colored by any emotional response.

Identity: Terms that refer to a wide range of trips to destinations that the travelers feel are essential to their personal identities and help answer the question “Who am I?” The emotional response to these trips is still strong, and the connection could be either personal (one's own country of origin), or more distant via a living family member, an ancestor from the past, or just belonging to a particular ethnic group. “Existential” tourism is a good example.

Cultural Enrichment: A group of terms that refer to travel prompted mainly by curiosity rather than strong emotional need. “Language” or “battlefield” tourism are good examples. The traveler wants to learn something about the culture of the country of her/his own origin or one he/she is connected through ancestry or ethnicity, and the trip could be very educational, but it will not “make the traveler cry” (low emotional response).

Family: Terms related to visiting living relatives. These trips can be highly emotional, may help better understand self or involve participation celebrations or rituals, thereby providing cultural enrichment, or simply undertaken to pay tribute, and the traveler does not feel emotional about the trip at all. “Family reunion” tourism and “VFR” are good examples of this type of travel.

Ancestors: A group of terms that refers to travel to places of ancestral origin, where the traveler no longer has living relatives but perhaps has the goal of tracing her/his lineage, exploring his/her genealogical tree. Again, these trips could be highly emotional or conducted purely out of curiosity and would not be more emotional than any international holiday.

Using the conceptual grouping, we checked if the 41 terms could be split into these nine categories. The terms in Table 3 are listed by their corresponding categories. As can be seen, most of the terms could be assigned to one of the nine groups, but the exact boundaries of each term do not always neatly align with the conceptual model. Most of the deviations were minor. Although the meaning of some terms either did not fully cover their corresponding area on the conceptual model or extended beyond the conceptual borders, the terms generally fit well into one of the nine categories. For example, “roots” or “diaspora” tourism clearly fell in the umbrella-term category, while “personal memory” or “homesick” tourism represented exactly the personal-emotional type of roots tourism.

Other terms were harder to fit due to their multiple meanings in the literature. For example, the terms “nostalgia” and “remembrance” tourism have been used in the literature to refer to both personal and historical nostalgia and memory, and thus could fit in both personal-emotional and historical-emotional categories (Hammoud, Haggag, & Boutros, 2016). This type of imprecise and conflicting terminology usage creates confusion that the present study seeks to rectify.

Despite some lack of correspondence between our conceptual model and how the terms have been defined and used in the literature, the grouping allowed us to identify overlapping and interchangeable terms. We then attempted to simplify our original mapping (Fig. 2) by selecting one best term for each of the nine facets of roots tourism. Fig. 4 provides the results of this exercise. Some of the terms provided a perfect name for their corresponding category. For example, “personal memory” appears to be a good label for the personal-emotional, while “existential” tourism corresponds precisely with the identity type of roots tourism. However, many terms either had a much broader meaning (e.g., “VFR” or “heritage” tourism), or the term is associated with a particular purpose and, thus, the term cannot be a general label for a broader category (e.g., “birthright” or “battleground” tourism).

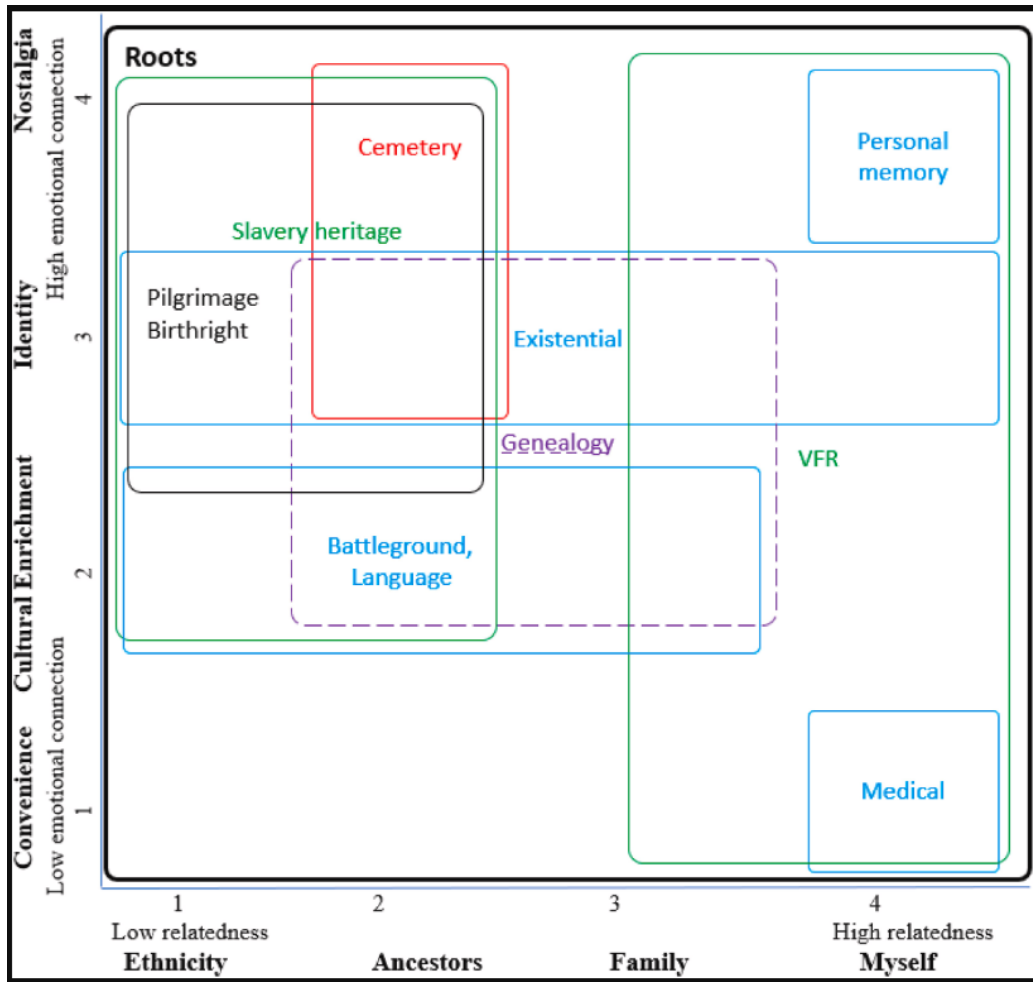


Fig. 4. The simplified map of the terminology on roots tourism.

6. Moving forward with precise terminology

While discovering the dimension of roots tourism, illustrating how the existing 41 terms fit onto a two-dimension map of the meanings, developing a conceptual model of facets of roots tourism, and suggesting, when possible, the optimal names choices, some of these facets make a valuable contribution to the efforts to systemize the chaotic terminology in the field, we did not want to stop there. The ideal outcome of this line of work should be a set of precise terms for each of the 16

cells of the 4×4 matrix, for the phenomenon as a whole, and possibly for some combinations of cells on the map. That would allow for the ultimate precision in terminology to avoid confusion in future literature. So as the next step, we set off to suggest just that.

It would be naïve of us to expect that the researchers in this field would immediately embrace our suggested list of precise terms for each facet of roots tourism. We also acknowledge that some of our choices are arbitrary, and other experts might feel that a different term would be better suited for one cell or another, or a different grouping of the cells might be preferable. However, it is crucial to understand the actual choice of term is unimportant as long as the field agrees on this choice and its meaning. For example, in physics, an interaction that changes the motion of an object is called “force.” Many other words could have been used to label the same phenomenon, such as “impact,” “compulsion,” “influence,” “might,” or the like. All of them would have served the purpose of denoting the phenomenon just as well; the term “force” was an arbitrary choice. What is critically important is that a single term was chosen, defined, and agreed upon to avoid confusion and facilitate an efficient discussion among the researchers. Based on our in-depth review and analysis of all terms used in the literature and their hundreds of definitions, we dare to suggest our optimal set of terms for labeling the phenomenon of roots tourism and its types and facets. We propose this scheme not as the final definitive guide but as a foundation, a starting point for the much-needed discussion.

Fig. 5 provides a map of the most suitable terminology as we see it. Most of these terms are self-explanatory and should be defined by re-stating the three common attributes of any roots tourism travel (international travel, personal connection, emotional response) followed by a specific combination of the degree of personal relatedness and emotional response. For example, “personal memory” tourism is international travel to a country that the traveler personally is from and feels an extreme nostalgia and emotional connection to (Hammoud et al., 2016).

In a couple of instances, it was impossible or unfeasible to convince one term to one cell on the matrix, so “ethnic reunion” and “sentimental” tourism each refer to two-cell areas on the map. For example, “ethnic reunion” tourism is international travel to a country of origin of the traveler's distant ancestors or ethnic group, and the traveler feels the destination is an important part of the travel's identity and culture.

We invite other researchers to modify and develop this model further. It is perhaps not the list of terms on the map, but the methodology we used to arrive at this result is the most significant contribution of this study. We hope that the framework we developed for a systemic analysis of the disparate terminologies and definitions will help the researchers working in this area develop a universally accepted set of terms eventually.

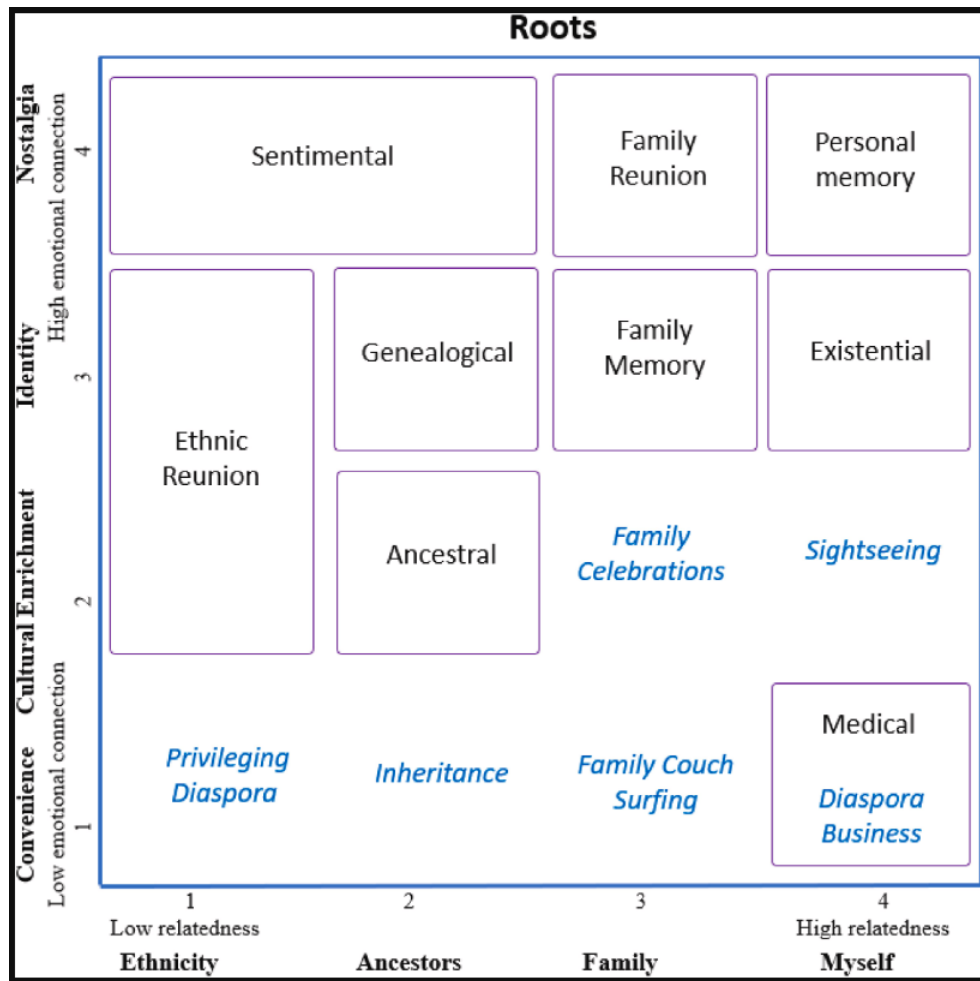


Fig. 5. Suggested precise optimal terms for each subtype of roots tourism.

7. The white spots on the map and predictions of new forms of roots tourism

One unexpected but potentially useful outcome of our review and model development was that it allowed for identifying the gaps, the so-called “white spots” on the map of roots tourism. For example, the 1869 rendering of Mendeleev's periodic table contained only 69 elements. However, the model allowed Mendeleev to predict the existence of more elements to fill the gaps in the table. For example, based on the “white spot” in the periodic table between thorium (90) and uranium (92), Mendeleev predicted there is a yet-unknown element in position (91) and even described its properties. That prediction was confirmed 29 years later, in 1900, when William Crookes isolated the element and named it protactinium. It took years, in some cases more than a century, to synthesize and definitively confirm the existence of many other elements, and the periodic table proved to be a useful guide on this road of discovery.

By no means do we imply that our two-dimensional map of roots tourism is akin to the immensely influential periodic table of elements. Nevertheless, our model could be useful in guiding the identification of new types of roots tourism that evaded the inquisitive eye of the scholars working in this area, or perhaps do not exist in their pure form yet. When looking at the maps depicted in Fig. 2, Fig. 4, Fig. 5, it caught our attention that cells 3:2, 4:2, 3:1, 2:1, and 1:1 were mainly empty (coordinates on the personal relatedness and emotional response axis). While

they all were encompassed by the generic terms like “roots” or “diaspora” tourism, there appeared to be no dedicated labels that would refer to these areas, and we found no studies talked about the particular types of roots tourism that would correspond to these combinations of relatedness and emotional connectedness. To fill the gaps, we conducted several brainstorming sessions to see if we could think of types of travel that would fall into these categories and name them. The following are the outcomes of this exercise, with our suggested names for these overlooked types of roots tourism (italicized on the map, Fig. 5):

3:2 – Family celebration tourism: This form of family-related international travel is distinct and less emotional than family reunions or trips to explore family archives to understand one's own identity better. Instead, the focus here is on observing cultural rituals and traditions, such as attending weddings, coming of age ceremonies, or traditional holiday celebrations.

4:2 – Sightseeing: The focus is also on cultural enrichment, but there is no familial connection. Instead, the destination is a country that the traveler has a personal connection to, perhaps a country where the person was born and raised, traveled to again to visit famous landmarks and learn more about the culture and history of the region.

4:4 – Diaspora business tourism: Although we already have a dedicated term in this cell, i.e., “medical” tourism, we decided to add one more that is of the same type but relates to a different trip purpose. Medical tourism in the diasporic context is a well-researched phenomenon. For example, the high cost of healthcare in the U.S. often prompts immigrants in the U.S. to travel back to their countries of origin to receive cheaper medical treatment. Convenience is the reason for the destination, as the local language skills and the familiarity with the location ensure the safety and efficiency of the transaction. Similarly, immigrants often engage in business in their country of origin, which necessitates visits that are low on emotional response and high on personal connectedness to the location.

3:1 – Family couch surfing: Trips that involve staying at a relative's home for a purpose that invokes a minimal emotional response. An example could be a vacation or a trip to a conference near where the traveler's relatives live. The traveler may not have a particularly close relationship with the relatives but undertakes the journey because the relative's hospitality allows for saving money on a hotel and makes it cheaper than another comparable destination.

3:2 – Inheritance: Trips to settle inheritance business. The traveler inherits some form of property from a distant ancestor and travels to the destination to file the necessary paperwork. The traveler may not feel any emotional connection to the destination, nor has any living family there, but can trace a connection to the location through the ancestral link and undertakes the trip to take care of this business. If it is a house in a picturesque area, the traveler may keep it and stay in it regularly for convenience reasons.

1:1 – Privileging diaspora tourism: Perhaps the most peculiar form of roots tourism where travel is conducted for the reasons to reaffirm an ethnic link to the destination to qualify for certain privileges or benefits. For example, some E.U. countries offer free higher education and healthcare to their citizens. Children in families that lived for generations outside Europe may travel back to reaffirm their ethnic heritage and fulfill other requirements to qualify for citizenship. Similarly, some countries offer privileges to the residents of the territories that once were part of the country, including citizenship. For example, Poland, Hungary, and Russia provide special privileges to residents of some regions of Ukraine who can prove their ethnic connection to these countries. Thus, many Ukrainians go through the process of obtaining the right to reside and work in these countries (e.g., Karta Polaka in Poland) and later seek seasonal or permanent employment there. While many who qualify for these programs feel a strong sense of historical nostalgia and

emotional connection to the place, often people who go through this process have long lost the emotional connection to the destination and do it as a matter of economic convenience and benefits.

Based on our review, these forms of research were not discussed in the literature. They are not entirely unknown, of course, but they have not enjoyed the kind of focused research as some other forms of roots tourism. We see this as an opportunity and encourage future researchers to take a closer look at these “whites spots” on the map.

8. Discussion

Let us conclude by reciting the story of this study. It was prompted by the need to locate the literature for a meta-analysis on roots tourism. With Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science at our service, we expected the task to be a trivial one: just type in the key term in the search bar and download the results. To our dismay, the task proved all but impossible. We quickly discovered that roots tourism appears in the literature under many different names. The use of terminology is chaotic, the same term can refer to very different things, and some things may have multiple interchangeable names.

To aid our literature search process, we set off to compile the complete collection of terms used to denote roots tourism as a whole, or its components and facets, make sense of how these terms are used, and decide which of them we should be using when searching for the literature for our meta-analysis. However, the deeper we delved in, the more obvious it became that the field lacks a common language, and making sense of the terminology would become a study in and of itself. While a challenge for our meta-analytic study, we saw the problem as an opportunity to serve the field by systemizing the terminology and providing a roadmap for future researchers who, like us, might be lost trying to navigate the literature.

Initially, we planned to conduct a descriptive study, limited to compiling and defining all terms used in the context of roots tourism. However, descriptive studies are only good when the underlying phenomenon has an elegant, logical structure. Uncovering and describing the logic is the contribution of the study. Unfortunately, the terminology used in the literature on roots tourism is all but logical. There appeared to be no clear system, and thus we saw the need and undertook the task of creating one.

8.1. The contributions of this study

Standard terminology is not only a sign of a mature field of studies but also a necessary condition towards progress in the field. A lack of common language hinders the exchange of ideas and impedes progress. It is not unusual for a young discipline to lack standard terminology. Natural sciences had gone through the pains of agreeing on a set of commonly accepted terms a long time ago, while in many subfields of social sciences, the process is far from complete. Roots tourism is one of these young areas of research that are yet to develop their universal terminologies.

Our study contributes to the literature on roots tourism in several important ways. First, we described the state of the literature on roots tourism, the problems and inconsistencies with the terminology it is fraught with. We conducted a thorough search and compiled a collection of 41 terms used as labels for the phenomenon. We provided the results of our analysis of the relative popularity of different terms and described how their use differs across disciplines, geographic areas, and time periods (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

Second, based on the comparative analysis of the 203 definitions of the 41 terms in our collection, we discovered two dimensions that provide a system for integrating and classifying the differences in meanings of the different terms. We mapped the 41 terms in the two-dimensional space, showing how they relate to one another, the overlaps, and differences in their meaning (Fig. 2). Based on the map, we also identified nine categories of terms that represent distinct types of roots tourism (Fig. 3). This model would be helpful not only for grouping the terms but also for analyzing the types of roots tourism.

Third, based on our analysis of the literature, additional research into the meanings and etymology of each of the words on our list, and using our conceptual model as a guide, we provided a list of precise optimal terms for each type of roots tourism (Fig. 5). Even if this particular set of terms will not be immediately accepted by the field, we hope that, at the very least, it will ignite a discussion of the problem and will lead to further refinement and development of the standard terminology to describe the phenomenon. Ultimately, it is not that important which of the terms the field settles on, as long as we all agree on the choices and their definitions.

Fourth, the meaning maps produced by this study revealed several gaps in the research on roots tourism. Based on our two-dimensional conceptual model, we identified several types of roots tourism that have not been an object of focused research. These omissions present a research opportunity, and we encourage future researchers to explore these areas in more depth.

Lastly, the methodology we employed to review, systemize, and conceptualize the terminology surrounding roots tourism can be used for similar types of analysis of other bodies of literature. Roots tourism is not the only area of research that lacks standard, universally agreed terminology, and we hope this paper will inspire our colleagues in other fields to do the same.

Notably, while the primary target audience of this study is academics researching roots tourism, the results of our study might also be of interest to the business world. First, professionals working in the tourism and hospitality industry interested in staying current on the latest empirical research might also have difficulties navigating this literature and, thus, would benefit from clearer and more consistent terminology. Second, the absence of standardized, commonly accepted, and commonly-understood terminology would hinder the ability of companies offering services related to roots tourism to advertise their products and communicate with their potential customers. Third, one of the outcomes of our study was a map that showed “white spots” on the map of roots tourism, i.e., types of travel not addressed in the literature. Likely, the types of trips that researchers have overlooked might likewise be the kinds of trips overlooked by businesses, indicating untapped markets and business opportunities. Lastly, a clear taxonomy and systemic classification of the types of trips provided by our study could aid managers in tourism and hospitality businesses in their efforts to better understand the niche they occupy in the market and better position their companies for success.

8.2. Limitations and directions for future research

The goal of this study was not to end but to start a discussion, not to provide definitive answers, but to show the way for finding the answers. Admittedly, some of our choices were arbitrary, and future researchers could further develop our conceptual model. Among the limitations of this study is that our mapping of the terms related to roots tourism was based on subjective ratings of only two researchers. While our ratings are a result of extensive research, more reliable mappings that better represent how the field interprets the different terms on our list could be produced by a larger

group of experts. Meaning maps produced based on larger panels of experts would be a valuable contribution to developing a common terminology on roots tourism.

Second, our conceptual model is based on two dimensions of roots tourism. While this solution is simple and elegant, it may not provide a complete picture. We encourage future researchers to search for more dimensions to provide a more detailed view of the phenomenon. Perhaps the types of roots tourism trips, and the names for each of them, could also be mapped along such dimensions as the duration of the travel, its cost, or the characteristics of the traveler and destination.

Third, despite our best attempts to be comprehensive in our review, we probably did not cover all terms related to roots tourism. There could be more types of travel to the places of significance to one's personal, family, ancestral, or ethnic history. One type that comes to mind would be travel to places of education, i.e., the school or university that the traveler once attended. We did not find any studies that specifically focused on this form of tourism, but it is possible we overlooked such research, or it will be conducted in the future, and it might deserve its own term. Tourism of this kind could include organized high-school or college reunions or self-initiated individual visits that perhaps could be labeled "alma mater tourism." It was not the goal, nor practically possible, to consider all possible varieties of such trips, but we hope the framework provided in this study will serve future researchers who will seek to introduce terminology for other kinds of travel.

9. Conclusion

The literature on roots tourism lacks standard terminology, which impedes navigation of the literature and hinders and exchange of ideas. The present study described the state of the problem, offered a model for systemizing the terminology, provided a list of optimal terms for each type of roots tourism, and even predicted the existence and suggested the names for the types of roots tourism that have not been the object of focused research yet. The present study may not provide definitive answers, but it provides a roadmap and methodology for further debate on the issue, and we hope it will lead to the development of standard universally-accepted terminology for research on roots tourism.

Submission declaration and verification

The work described has not been published previously, and it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. If this manuscript is accepted for publication in the Journal of Hospitality And Tourism Management, all authors approve of its publication, and the manuscript will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright holder.

Declaration of competing interest

No financial support was provided for the study, nor did other people or organizations provide their support that could influence or bias our work. The authors have no potential competing interests or conflicts of interests related to their involvement in this study.

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