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Diaspora tourism and well-being over life-courses

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Abstract

This research reconceptualises the linkages between tourism and well-being by considering well-being as dynamic assemblages that exist dependent on performative impacts of place, age, time, and contextual events. Adopting a biographical approach, we examined life histories of 26 migrants, and explored how diasporic return shaped their subjective well-being over life-courses based on their own articulations of home return experiences, meanings, feelings, and life purposes. Four patterns of how the effects of diaspora tourism change over life-courses were identified, depending on individual's early exposures to home place and culture, age of first and later return, change of life purposes and conceptions of well-being. The findings encourage further debates over temporal variability in possible linkages between tourism and subjective well-being.

Keywords: diaspora tourism; subjective well-being; life-course; biographical approach; Chinese migrants; assemblage

Introduction

There has been a substantial body of research conducted on the consequences of tourism by investigating its health and wellness benefits (Chen & Petrick, 2013; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Chen, Petrick, & Shahvali, 2016; Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016; Gao & Kerstetter, 2018; Gill, Packer, & Ballantyne, 2019). By developing and/or applying different scales and constructs to measure the positive and negative affects associated with tourism and vacation experiences, they tested whether these affects in various life domains influenced subjective well-being (hereafter as SWB) and overall life satisfaction (Kim, Woo, & Uysal, 2015; Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, & Yu, 2011). Another strand of research, meanwhile, has explored the perceived benefits of travel and holidays in particular contexts by drawing upon the lived experiences of different groups of people, such as mothers of children with autism (Sedgley, Prichard, Morgan, & Hanna, 2017), social tourists (McCabe & Johnson, 2013), the elderly (Kim et al., 2015; Morgan, Prichard, & Sedgley, 2015), individuals with vision impairment (Richards, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2010), and so forth. This body of research has advanced tourism knowledge by problematising the pre-assumed discourses of tourism experience and challenging the positivist commitments and the ontological assumption that well-being is a static, stable, and homogeneous individual or collective state which is insensitive to place and context (Austin 2015; Diener et al, 2004; Conradson, 2012; Pitt, 2014). This research calls for more explorative studies on the topic which go beyond the identification and theorisation of measurement constructions of the satisfaction scales and hear the voices of individuals on the depth and breadth of their travel experiences.

Claims have been made by scholars from various disciplines encouraging the understanding of well-being beyond a list of components or quantifiable and discrete attributes (Atkinson, 2013; Smith & Reid, 2017), and considering the phenomenon as “dynamic topological reconfigurings/entanglements/relationalities/(re)articulations” (Barad, 2003, p.818) that exist dependent on the performative impacts of place, activity, age, and contextual events (Atkinson & Scott, 2015). As Giele and Elder (1998) argued: “any point in the life span must be viewed dynamically as the consequence of past experience and future expectation as well as the integration of individual motive with external constraint” (p.19). In this regard, a life-course perspective would provide a dynamic and holistic view for the researchers to examine the consequences of tourism and its impacts on an individual’s SWB from a much longer timeframe. Instead of reducing well-being into pre-defined categories or attributes, it will facilitate a relational and intra-active thinking (Thrift, 2004; Barad, 2003), which enables the

researchers to see how the tourist's past encounters, current perceptions and values, and future expectations enfold and exhibit a more continuous process of shaping SWB over his/her life course. As such, individuals' physical, cultural and emotional encounters before, during and after their travel all play a role in influencing their life purposes and satisfaction, and more importantly, their travel and life meanings as well as conceptions of well-being will change over time. This will foster sensitivity to the complex taking-place of well-being, and to "break down assumed ontological categories in well-being scholarship, provide a more hybrid, posthuman ground for the understanding of this contested term" (Smith & Reid, 2017, p.808).

Drawing upon these considerations, this study adopts DeLanda's (2006) assemblage theory and Barad's (2003) relational thinking to reconceptualise the linkages between diaspora tourism and SWB as complex, changing and emergent becomings through interactions between different and changing actors which are only partly planned, ordered, or controlled (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011). Chinese immigrants have a long history of travelling to ancestral home and seeking connections to their personal legacy. However, current tourism scholarship has tended to subdivide a migrant's life course into a series of trajectories and only examined the impacts of diasporic return by focusing on a single event or episode(s), or looking at a period between two consecutive events (e.g. Li & Chan, 2017). This may overlook the continuity of diaspora's behaviour and under-evaluate the complexity of the dynamic and on-going process a diasporic individual is going through over lifetime in constructing SWB. Therefore, a qualitative research design with a biographical approach that based on life biographies of 26 Chinese migrants with multiple home return experiences across their lives was applied. The approach enabled the researchers to look more closely into these tourists' life experiences and examine more deeply how SWB has been fostered in the continuum of their life span through his/her early experience, cultural exposure, trip encounters, values, emotions, expectations, reflections that entangle with time and place (Smith & Reid, 2017; Atkinson & Scott, 2015). Attending to the issues that the participants raised and considered as significant to their return journey and SWB, we analysed their changing perceptions and the different meanings they attached to their home return travel, and explored how the relations between diasporic return and SWB change. By doing so, two questions are answered: 1) Whether and how do the relations between diasporic return and SWB change over time? 2) What factors contributed to the changing relations? A new understanding on how the journeys to ancestral home impact on diaspora's SWB over time

can be developed through identifying new elements that entered and new conjunctions that have been fostered during this process. This research design offers an invaluable perspective to bring sensitivity to the relations between diasporic return, well-being, time, place and context, and open up further debates over the assemblage thinking of tourism and well-being.

2. Literature review

2.1 The assemblage thinking of well-being

Although it has been widely agreed that well-being comprises multiple dimensions (e.g. the objective and subjective, the hedonic and eudaimonic), it is only until more recently that concepts of well-being have been extended beyond objective measures of wealth and material circumstances (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). SWB, defined as “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his/her life”, has become a desirable state for both individuals and many organizations and societies (Diener et al., 2004, p. 63). Due to its abstract nature, researchers and policy-makers tend to obtain standardised indicators to evaluate SWB by breaking it down into constitutive dimensions, through a component approach to well-being (Atkinson & Joyce, 2011; Atkinson et al., 2012). For example, in schemas that elaborated the components of personal SWB, variants were developed to differentiate hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being (Ryan & Ryff, 2001). Components were derived from empirical research on what aspects people define as important to their well-being, and a set of domains were extracted from preliminary public engagement covering a wide range of factors or determinants of well-being that both interact with and respond to other external collective determinants. Based upon a well-established literature within social sciences that assumes well-being as an entity that includes both objective characteristics or subjective assessment (Atkinson, 2013), this approach has dominated current research and practice through identification and theorisation of independent elements that comprise well-being. In this regard, well-being have been conceived as a static, stable, and unchanged entity which is insensitive to place and context (Smith & Reid, 2017; Austin 2015).

An increasing number of scholars challenge this approach and conceptualise well-being as part of a performative situation and a dynamic and relational “taking-place”, which is dependent on everyday encounters with complex assemblages of people, things and places (Thrift, 2004; Atkinson, 2013; Smith & Reid, 2017). Well-being is reframed as relational topological entanglements, being comparable to Deleuzian assemblages, composed of

heterogeneous elements that may be human and non-human, organic and inorganic, technical and natural. Such entanglements are constantly opening up to new lines of flight, new becomings, and this can ever be a provisional process, during which “relations may change, new elements may enter, alliances may be broken, new conjunctions may be fostered” (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011, p.126). In this sense, what we see in the assemblages of well-being will to some extent be determined by our temporal framework of observation, and thus the degree of being well will be largely depending on when and how we investigate, as elements are drawn together at a particular point of time, and their shape shifts according to the “angle of vision” (Li, 2007, p.265).

Therefore, the state of well-being is dynamic, and it could fluctuate within shorter periods of time, or increase or decrease over longer periods of time (Sonnentag, 2015). Researchers have incorporated a dynamic view to explore the long-term changes as well as short-term fluctuations of SWB and the links to an individual’s experiences and behaviours (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sonnentag, 2015). It is found that people’s conceptions and perceived significant components of well-being changed with age (Ryff, 1989). People in different age groups held differing conceptions of well-being, for instance, younger adults were more interested in novelty, knowledge, and experience expansion; while older adults were more interested in depth, poignancy and positive coping with change (Carstensen et al., 2000). Ryff (1991) looked into a more detailed age classification and found that older adults experienced less personal growth than younger groups; middle-aged adults experienced more autonomy than younger or older groups; and middle and older groups experienced more mastery than the younger group. Several other methods, such as the Day Reconstruction Method (Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2004) and time series analysis (e.g. in Gall, Evans, & Howard, 1997; White, Alcock, Wheeler, & Depledge, 2013) were applied to evaluate the changes of well-being across time. These studies have acknowledged the role of time and lifespan in fostering and adjusting well-being, as individuals are likely to assign differing importance to the activities that they would conduct in pursuit of their well-being in different life stages.

Over time, the assemblages of well-being are also changing with people’s personal values, life events, ever-changing relationships with people and places. For example, personal values, which are shaped from individuals’ psychosocial development and under social and cultural influences, will determine the meanings people attach to their certain behaviours (Sagiv, Roccas, Cieciuch, and Schwartz, 2017). By predicting a large variety of attitudes, preferences,

and personal goals underlying them, values and meanings could affect how individuals perceive their behaviours and experiences, and achieve sense of satisfaction (Bosangit, Hibbert, & McCabe, 2015). Luhmann, Hofmann, Eid and Lucas (2012) compared the effects of different life events on SWB and found that unemployment and bereavement had much more negative effects on SWB. Indeed, some events would result in permanent changes in life satisfaction and how people think about being well, and sometimes such changes could be very large despite of presented notable individual differences in adaptation that occurred (Lucas, 2007). Changing relationships with places may also permanently disrupt the original assemblages of people, places and well-being. For example, forced relocation was found to have undesirable psychological consequences to individuals, which were detrimental to health and SWB (Fried, 2000). These findings raise further concerns over the performative roles of place, age, and contextual events in the assemblages of well-being and tourism, and questions whether diaspora tourists will change their perceptions of well-being and attach differing weights to home return travel in fulfilling their SWB over time.

2.2 Tourism and subjective experience of well-being

The past decade has witnessed a burgeoning development in researching the links between tourism and SWB. Tremendous advancement has been made in terms of developing indicators and assessment scales to capture SWB, most of which have been focused on overall life satisfaction or domain satisfaction (Uysal et al., 2016; Holm, Lugosi, Croes, & Torres, 2017). Here, various terms were used interchangeably when researchers refer to subjective aspects of well-being, including SWB, life satisfaction, happiness, hedonic well-being, emotional well-being, etc. (Sirgy, 2012), and major domains/dimensions that SWB comprises were identified. For example, Cummins (1996) identified five major domains of SWB, including emotional, health, social, material, and work; and extended these domains into Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale (ComQol) consisting of domains of material well-being, health, productivity, intimacy, safety, community, and emotional well-being after grouping 173 domains. In a more recent study, Dolnicar, Yanamandram, and Cliff (2012) put extra emphasis on several domains that stressed personal eudaimonia and should be included into the consideration of SWB: spiritual life, goals/hopes for the future, and self-esteem/acceptance. Another study by Sirgy et al. (2011) demonstrated that tourists' positive and negative memories generated from the most recent trip affect satisfaction in 13 life domains, which in turn influence their overall life satisfaction. This body of research makes

solid contributions to identifying the effects that tourism experience or activities bring to different domains of well-being directly or indirectly.

Meanwhile, more tourism scholars begin to concern the dynamic, relational and situated account of tourism experiences through exploring embodied and multi-sensory encounters that tourism and holidays offer to SWB. For instance, Richards (1999), among others, found that memorable and meaningful experience in vacations facilitated personal development and the pursuit of personal and social interests through providing a space of mental rest and relaxation. Sedgley et al. (2017) discussed the embodied, relational and complex manifestations of tourism experiences by studying the challenging, isolating and stressful travel encounters by mothers of children with developmental difficulties. Their study reframed tourism as a journey of mixed emotions, which is indeed “multifaceted, complex, interlinked and intersubjective” (p.22), especially for care-takers. Likewise, Mowatt and Chancellor (2011) analysed the reflections and interpretations of 14 individuals who have visited Cape Coast Castle, Ghana, and found that tourism to dark sites and slave castles provoked both positive feelings of enjoyment, meaningful, and personal growth, and senses of shocking in relation to the images and imaginations of the history of slavery and violence. How tourism produced improvement in eudaimonic aspects of well-being such as optimism, family life and relationships through offering more than short-term, hedonic experiences to disadvantaged groups was also explored by McCabe and Johnson (2013) from the context of social tourism.

Despite the progress made in comprehending different views of well-being and its indicators, there are only a few authors who have investigated how travel impacts on perceived health and wellness changed over time, and whether the degree of importance of travel change depending on different life stages and other background variables (Uysal et al., 2016; Sirgy, 2010; Chen & Petrick, 2013; Ouyang, Gursoy, & Chen, 2019). For instance, Chen, Lehto, & Cai (2013) examined the during-trip emotional changes and post-trip effects of Chinese tourists and found that these tourists’ SWB was boosted immediately after the vacation but faded after two months. McCabe and Johnson (2013) also noted that the changes in affect balance and optimism brought by social tourism activities might be short-lived for social tourists, as they had to face similar daily life challenges upon return. A more recent study by Kwon and Lee (2020) reveals that SWB had risen 15 days before travel and lasted for about 1 month after travel, suggesting that expectations and serendipity had an indirect effect on the change rate of life satisfaction through travel satisfaction. Gibson and Yiannakis (2002)

looked at a longer timeframe and investigated the relationship between psychological needs and tourist role preference over the adult life-course. Their finding highlighted the specific background characteristics such as life stage and previous tourism experiences in shaping tourists' needs and choices, revealing that the more experienced and knowledgeable the tourists were about different geographical locations and cultures, the more influential their life stage was in shaping their tourism style. These significant findings represent an urgent need in tourism scholarship to go beyond constructing travel satisfaction scales and to explore further the dynamic and relational account of tourism encounters. Indeed, how tourism encounters shape SWB should not be understood as independent of personal, geographical, and cultural contexts (Sirgy, 2010; Bosnjak et al., 2016); the linkages might be best explained through examining a set of interwoven trajectories across an individual's life course. By taking into account both situational and individual characteristics, we may be able to see how individuals' needs vary with their ages, life tasks, challenges, and affordances (Ryan & La Guardia, 2000), and how their unfolding needs are fulfilled by their travel experiences.

3. Methodology

3.1 A biographical approach

This study aims to explore the process of how diaspora tourists foster sense of well-being over time through their home return travel and what themes and factors significantly contribute to the changing effects of diasporic return. A biographical approach that concerns the (re)construction of life histories and the constitution of meaning is adopted, focusing more on the subjective selection of important life events of the participants and the subjective interpretation of their own life events and trajectories (Roberts, 2002). Based on Chinese migrants' biographical narratives and documents (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), we consider the subjective time scale revealed by those events that the participants considered significant. Thus, instead of looking at only one trip or incident, we consider different strains of time and event points in the participants' lives, which gives insights on social processes and figurations and uncovers a broader ancestral, social and cultural context of such processes. As a result, we can have a chance to truly place the participants at the centre of the research, walking through the complexities of their unique affective, relational and embodied lived experiences, hear their personal voices, raise own consciousness, obtain empowerment, and attract

attention to the meaning and experience which is emancipatory and transformative to their lives (Sedgley, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2006; Roberts, 2002). Further, the biographical approach also offers us an opportunity to place the migrants' lived experiences as a major part of relational and situated assemblages with time (temporality), their bodies (embodiment), other people (intersubjectivity), and the self (selfhood) (Atkinson, 2013). We are able to witness and unpack the processes in which their engagements with places, time, and the significant others affectively and cognitively change their reality and lead to their further negotiations of meanings (Sedgley, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2011). During the research process, we had no attempt to generalise our participants' thoughts and feelings, but aim to explore the nuances of a diasporic individual's return experience over their life course continuum, and reveal how their personal and cultural context influences the meanings of home return and being well.

3.2 Fieldwork and participatory approach

In order to reach a diverse sample from the Chinese immigrant community, the researchers conducted fieldwork to four cities: Jiangmen as a start, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and followed by Vancouver, from February to October 2013, to participate in the local events and recruit participants. Trips to Jiangmen played an important part in the beginning of the research, helping the researchers immerse to the local context, learn its long and well-known migration history and appreciate its successful work of attracting Chinese migrants to travel back. With assistance from the local government (Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, Tourism Bureau, the Publicity Department), we participated in two local Chinese Overseas Carnivals, and an anniversary celebration of a local high school, whereby the researchers were able to observe how different types of return travellers interacted with their ancestral home and local community. Multiple contacts with different Chinese migrant associations were successfully built. Although our trips to Jiangmen were interactive and immersive in nature, they also raised concerns that we need to get in touch with more Chinese migrant members who have not travelled back for the carnivals, but return more privately for roots-seeking activities. That part of population might not show strong and solid ties with the local community or be encountered in Jiangmen, but may return for personal quests and purposes. Therefore, we continued the fieldwork to North America and reached more generational migrants through

five Chinese migrant institutions, two located in Canada and three in America, and recruited interviewees with their assistance.

The fieldwork approach plays an essential part in this research for initiating an immersive and more reflective research process. It provided us a valuable opportunity to stay with our participants, participate in and talk about the events with them, observe their behaviours and share their reflections, and search for underlying patterns, relationships, and meanings more deeply. By doing so, we were able to obtain a more authentic and firsthand information, which has stimulated and inspired us to explore our research questions and extend the debates in a more innovative way.

3.3 Sampling methods and life history interviews

This study is based on life history interviews of 26 Chinese migrants (first to fifth-generation, America or Canada-born, between the ages of 40-70). Purposive and referral sampling methods were used to reach potential participants, who are middle-aged to elderly Chinese migrants, have multiple experiences of visiting their ancestral home. Purposive sampling techniques allowed the researchers to identify and select individuals that are proficient and willing to provide rich information of the studied phenomenon (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Referrals from selected participants enabled us to reach more participants from the hidden population, for example, the Chinese descendants whose family migrated several generations ago may not have counted themselves as part of the Chinese migrant community. By doing so, we were able to have a diverse sample, consisting of migrants with varied (family) migration histories, different locations of ancestral hometown, education backgrounds, and occupations (as shown in Table 1).

Before the interviews, we introduced our research project and informed the interviewees that participating in the research was completely voluntary and anonymous, and they might need to share some of their personal experiences, important life events, private feelings, and perceptions. The interview questions were prepared with semi-structured and open-ended questions, surrounding their life histories, for instance, “can you tell us about your family history”, and “can you tell us more about your home return travel”, to open up further discussions of the interviewees’ feelings and perceptions about their lives, personally important events, and home return travel experience over time. During the interviews, the authors attempted to let the interviewees lead the flow of conversation, and as a result, the

structure of interview was flexible to allow their memory and life information to emerge out of chronological order but in the order of their own interest and perceived significance. Follow-up questions were asked once the interviewees opened up a new but relevant topic which they regarded as important for illustrating their feelings of return, which encouraged greater depths of their reflections. Some interviewees were also encouraged to provide multiple-media resources voluntarily to illustrate their narratives, such as their return travel photographs, drawings of genealogical trees, videos of return trips, etc. (examples in figure 1).

Table 1. Participants' profile

Subjective experiences of home return	Pseudonym	Age	Generation	Gender	Current place of residence	Occupation
Journey to self-discovery and eudaimonia	Vincent	46	6	Male	San Francisco	Travel agent
	Kathy	53	3	Female	Vancouver	Entrepreneur
	Richard	70	5	Male	San Francisco	Doctor
	Charles	72	5	Male	Los Angeles	Retired
	Jasmine	50	4	Female	Vancouver	Entrepreneur
Journey from a deepest experience in life to accustomed and habitual practice	Paul	57	3	Male	Sacramento	Professor
	Judy	63	3	Female	Los Angeles	Professor
	David	50	3	Male	Vancouver	Doctor
	Doug	66	1	Male	San Francisco	Chinese language school headmaster
	Max	48	1	Male	Toronto	Entrepreneur
A journey from personal quest realisation to the community's collective good	Gregory	70	1	Male	Vancouver	Retired
	Gavin	58	1	Female	Los Angeles	Restaurant owner
	Danny	57	1	Male	Vancouver	Entrepreneur
	Zelner	53	1	Male	Los Angeles	Entrepreneur
	Louise	62	1	Male	Los Angeles	Engineer
	Cliff	62	5	Male	San Francisco	Anaesthetist
From obligatory travel toward self-interested personal hedonia	Russell	78	1	Male	Vancouver	Retired
	Susan	65	1	Female	San Francisco	Professor
	Ben	50	2	Male	Vancouver	Travel agent
	Steven	45	1	Male	Vancouver	Entrepreneur
	Tag	79	1	Male	Vancouver	Retired
	Eddie	65	1	Male	Vancouver	Retired
	Estelle	70	1	Male	Vancouver	Retired
	Alice	40	1	Female	Los Angeles	Entrepreneur
	Molly	60	2	Female	Vancouver	Writer
	Leonard	55	1	Male	Vancouver	Judge

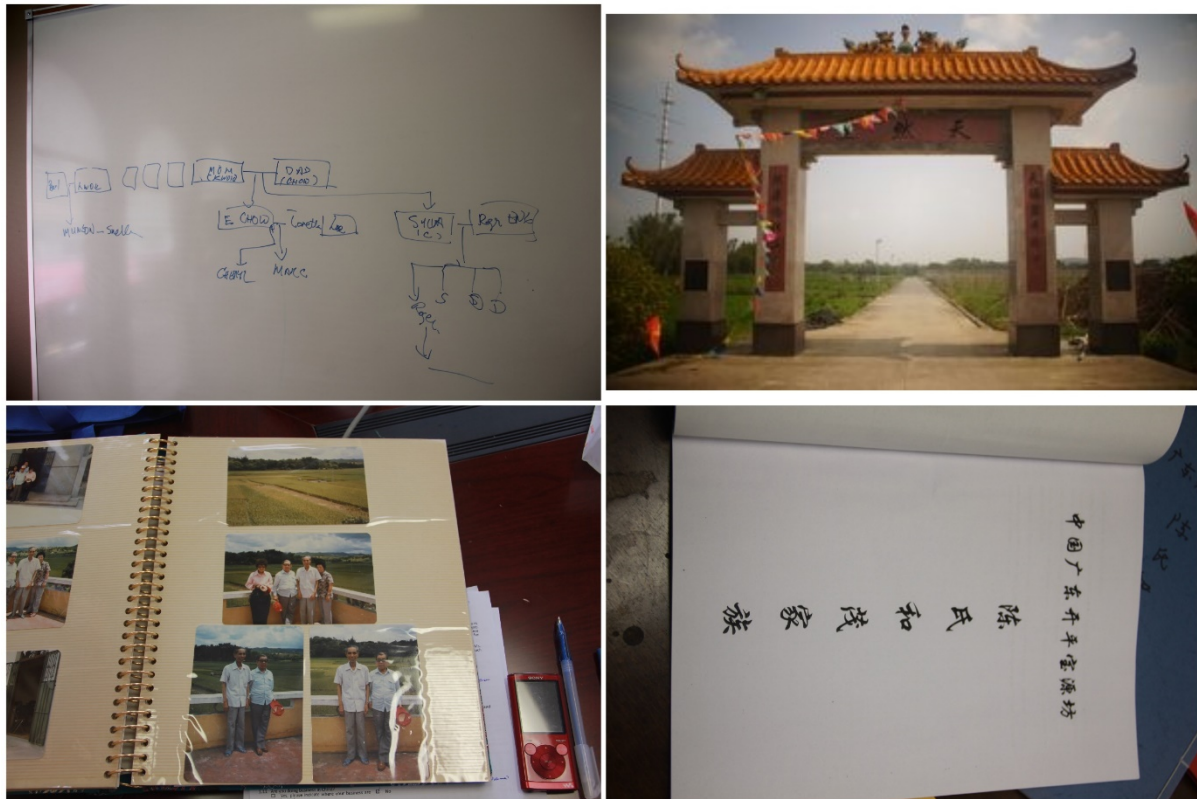


Figure 1. Examples of other sources used by participants to illustrate their subjective experiences (top left: Richard's drawings of genealogical trees; top right: the gate to David's ancestral village; bottom left: home return visit albums of Vincent; bottom right: Jasmine's pedigree of clan)

3.4 Data analysis

The aim of data analysis was to identify significant patterns behind each case and link these patterns across cases. The first stage of analysis involved transcribing, as well as interpreting a chronological account of life events and important home return trips provided by the participants from the large volume of data generated from all cases. Both a visual and text biography were created to help the researchers raise awareness of how these life events and important return trips changed interviewees' lives. The second stage went further by focusing on comparisons of the emerging changes and fostering patterns across cases. Linkages were made between the events highlighted by our participants and the changes they presented. This is the stage when initial patterns emerged and documented for further discussions and confirmation between researchers. The third stage was about revisiting data, patterns, and assessing their coherence across all cases. In this stage, preliminary patterns were finalised

through full discussions between researchers, during which some patterns merged, overlapped, and were modified, resulting in a final four scenarios of changing impacts of diasporic return.

3.5 Research limitations

The research design and sampling methods also had limitations which need to be acknowledged for possible improvement in future research. First, although purposive sampling can provide reliable and robust data, we need to acknowledge the bias clearly in our interpretation of the data. The study findings may be repeated in a different population; however, it is believed that in other ethnicities and cultures, there might be different patterns showing different changing effects of diasporic return on migrants' SWB, which might not be fully captured in the Chinese context. For example, in the Chinese context, collectivism was reinforced in its traditional cultures, sub-cultures, beliefs, and policies over years (Steele & Lynch, 2013), which may influence Chinese migrants' personal values, return purposes, and conceptions of well-being. Second, some participants we include in the final sample were relatively younger, such as Alice (40 years old) and Steven (45 years old). The patterns they presented during our research will rather be open-ended, for as long as they would keep travelling back to China, it will be highly possible that they will encounter new experiences that caused different changes afterwards. As such, the patterns they presented here might not be their final and fixed ones, and this also supports the assemblage thinking that new elements may enter and new patterns may foster (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011), and thus, how diaspora tourism shapes SWB is an on-going process.

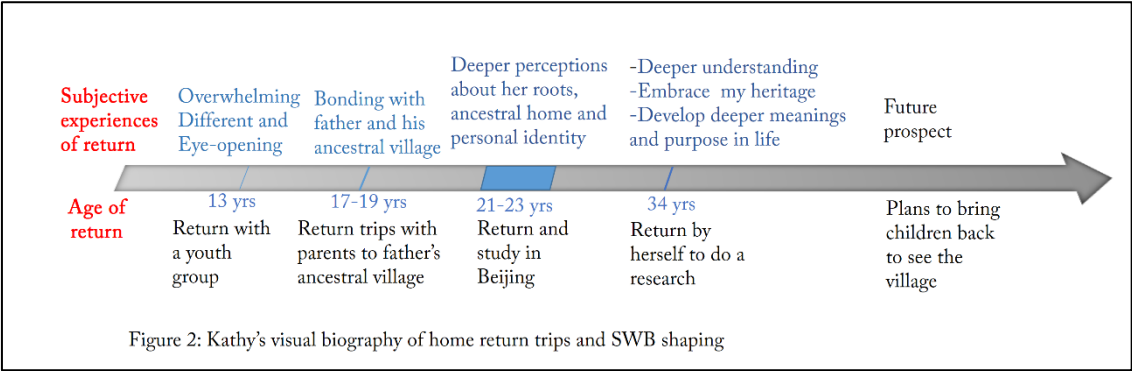
4. Findings: fostering SWB in diasporic return

This section analyses the changing responses that the participants demonstrated during their home return journey over years and discusses how their journey generates different meanings across their life course and in turn provoked differing sense of well-being. Four main types of process are identified — from self-discovery to eudaimonia, from an optimal experience to accustomed practice, from spiritual healing to collective good, and from obligatory to personal hedonia, from their articulation on how their trips fostered meanings of being well through home return travel. Looking into each type respectively allows the researchers to

answer the questions of how they felt about themselves, their trip(s) and the home and host places; how their feelings, perceptions were used to (co)produce their understanding of being well; and more importantly how their personal definitions of being well might change with the trip.

4.1 A journey to self-discovery and eudaimonia

Interviewees like Kathy (53, Vancouver, 3rd generation Chinese-Canadian) narrated how her trips to China at different ages mean differently and gradually led her to self-discovery and identification of purpose in life (Figure 2).



She had her first return trip with a youth group when she was 13. This trip was rather an eye-opening experience, so much so she had stayed in her ancestral village Taishan for a week and established a fresh impression about this place. She articulated how growing up in a white dominant environment made herself naive about China and the Chinese culture, leading to a rather overwhelming and different first-return experience:

“In 1974, I was just a 13-year-old without any understanding of what China is. I did not quite understand what ‘Chinese in Canada’ meant until I went to China. I realised that there is a whole huge population of Chinese people living in somewhere else in the world... It was so different for me to be a part of majority than a part of minority...I have never been among so many Chinese people.”

Nonetheless, Kathy’s feelings changed over several times of return, as the meanings of return shifted depending on what age she was and what past experience she had. From 17 to 19, she returned with her parents and father respectively, and after that she spent two years studying Mandarin in Beijing. It was until then when she became more thoughtful and started to understand China and her ancestry more deeply, by fostering deeper perceptions toward her

roots, ancestral home and her identity. She elaborated how bonding with her father gradually strengthened during this period:

“I know China in 80s, because I spent several years there. I had a lot of impression there. I became more mature and thoughtful, so I wanted to know more about my ancestry... It was during this time I gained a deep understanding of my ancestor’s situation. I understood my father well, why he was interested in China, why he was highly attached to China. He was born in China and served as a soldier. He didn’t come to Canada until 1948. The Chinese who experienced the Civil War in China were very different from those living in Canada. My mother’s mother side, they came during the Gold Rush.”

Kathy’s last time visitation was in 1995. She stayed in the ancestral house alone for a couple of weeks. She felt she was so keen to explore more about her family history and this became her purpose.

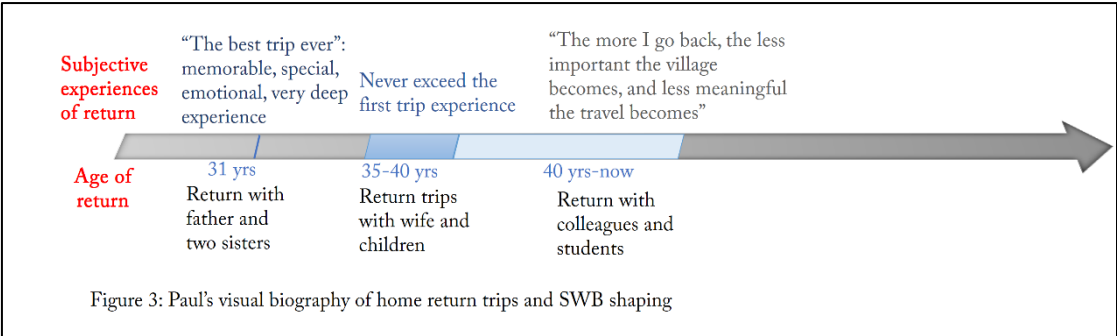
“A relative in Guangzhou met me and took me to the village. I slept in the old ancestral house alone...I was doing a research on my grandmother of my father side at that time... The story of my paternal grandmother was unknown...What they had experienced, how they managed to survive... and I wanted to explore more at that time.”

Kathy’s experience demonstrates a unique process of constant meaning-negotiation and transformation from a simple eye-opening trip to a much deeper and significant life event for self-discovery and personal fulfillment. The process towards flourishing and goal-achieving is impressive, not to mention the way in which her cognitive and affective evaluations about China, Chinese culture, and herself changed significantly due to the age of return, the knowledge before return, companions, purposes and activities of her trips. And ultimately what her multiple trips all add up to is a journey to self-discovery and eudaimonia.

4.2 From an optimal experience to a mundane practice

Several interviewees presented a different pattern of change throughout their home return journey from a deepest encounter to a habitual and mundane practice over years. Unlike Kathy, these individuals experienced a downward change on the depth of their visit experience, showing that their followed trips have not made them happier or more excited,

nor facilitated to achieve a deeper meaning in life. The meanings of home return, thus, have not been deepened over time; instead, their follow-up trips became too common for them to have a deeper reflection (Figure 3).



Paul's (57, Sacramento, 2nd generation Chinese-American) case well manifested this type of change. He visited his ancestral village Taishan for the first time in 1987 with his father and two sisters. This trip, being described as “the best trip ever” in his life, became an exquisite and personally significant life event, which helped him feel more complete. He explained why the first trip meant so much to him:

“It is very common for the Chinese migrants to go forth and back. My grandfather went back and forth a few times; my father also went back many times to the village, that is one of his favorite things to do. I have visited the village about 6 times... I remember it was difficult for us to get into the village at that time, but that was apparently something special. We had two roast pigs to my great grandfather’s cemetery. It was the best pig I have ever eaten... It was a memorable family event, and it changed my emotional feelings to the village. It was very deep experience. When people experience something special for the first time, they have very deep impression...”

Unfortunately, the first-time experience has never been repeated and the meanings of his later trips have changed:

“I have been back a number of times with my wife and kids, we went to my wife’s ancestral village too, but it was never quite like the first trip... My most recent trip was around three years ago, when I taught in Guangzhou. I went with some of my students. The more I go back, the less important the village becomes, and less meaningful the travel becomes... It might because I become older... the village has

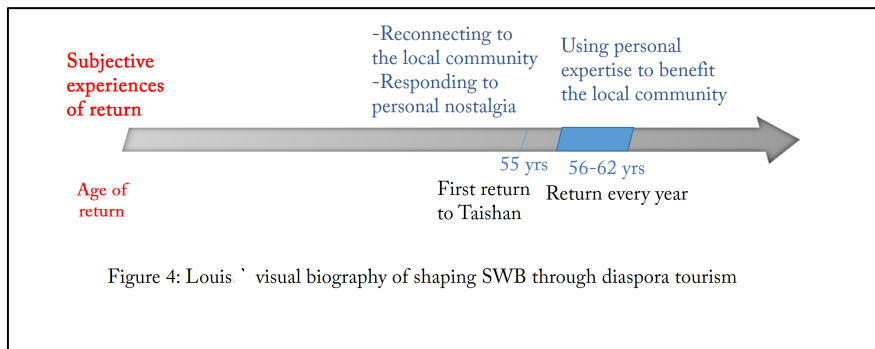
changed a lot...I can never experience 'the first-time experience' again, and I can never go back to 'the first trip' anymore."

Paul's return stories exhibited how the meanings of home return travel could transform from very deep self-completion to habitual visits with accustomed and shallow influences to one's well-being. To these individuals, the early travel with family represents, and the influences of their later trips were associated with their previous visit experience, what they have encountered, their new expectations and purposes. All has shaped the changing effects of home return travel on their well-being. As a result, the impacts of followed trips will depend on whether their trip meanings changed and the extent to which they fulfilled their new purposes. They can impress to a similar degree, while with more they have experienced and understood, their feelings were completely different, as the meanings of the other trips to their lives are completely different.

4.3 From personal quest realisation to the collective common good

Some participants' return journey, like Louis's (62, Los Angeles, 1st generation Chinese-American), has exhibited a unique transformation of meanings from realising personal quest to seeking for the common good of Chinese migrant community. Some shared the commonality of being forced to leave their hometown due to poverty and political reasons, and their connections to ancestral home were forcibly cut off. After successfully establishing their own career in the host countries, their primary trips to China were mainly about obtaining connections with the local community, "getting in touch" with their fellow villagers, and responding to their long-time nostalgia. However, with more trips back, the quest of their return shifted from obtaining to offering. They talked more about how their recent trips helped them realise their true value which should be using their own expertise to help the local folks and benefit the local community.

In Louis' case, he did not conduct his first return trip until 2007. He was born in Taishan and had been living in Hong Kong for 10 years until he migrated to Los Angeles at 16. After living in LA for over 40 years, he started to travel back to Taishan and get connected with local people there (Figure 4).



He reflected on his early trips:

“Taishan was so distant to me. I only have misty memories about it ... My first trips were to reconnect with my relatives there. I have a cousin in Taishan, but not very close. But our Chinese value family connections very much...So we visited our ancestral house, and it was when I started to sponsor for rebuilding it...”

The meanings of his return journey transformed when Louis became more aware of the true value of these trips and what other goals he could fulfil through them.

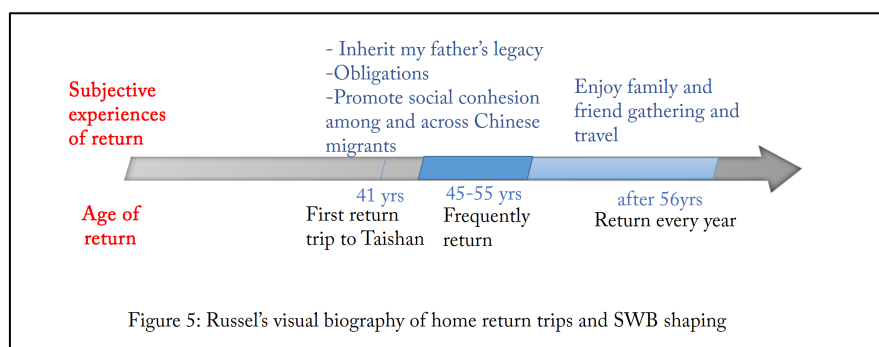
“I am an engineer. During my trips, I could not help to notice that most workers employed by the local factories were all from the North part of China. They were not willing to employ local people, and part of the reasons was there were no technical schools at that time for training professional workers, technicians, and engineers. That is my expertise, so I helped them build a professional school... After that, I almost return every year, sometimes multiple times a year... I have a stronger desire to help those people in my hometown. And I feel lucky that I find a way to help them. I have a dream that the people in my hometown can learn skills and find a job by themselves instead of waiting for others' help... I have not thought my trips can be this fulfilling.”

When talking to these individuals, it was noted that what they referred with their trips were deeply rooted in their own interpretations of cultural values in terms of emphasising cohesiveness among community members over personal interests. As a result, the meanings of their home return changed over time, from an event stressing on personal quest and individualism to more collective responsibilities. The effects of home return journey, then, were transformed from obtaining individual well-being to facilitating collective well-being of the local and migrant community.

4.4 From performing social obligations towards seeking self-interested hedonia

Several participants presented a notable change from feeling obligatory in early trips to seeking personal hedonia in later trips. In early trips, they travelled back more to represent their Chinese migrant associations. Much of their early travel was about obligations and social responsibilities, as they shared responsibilities of organising trips to China, promoting social cohesion among community members, and maintaining close ties with the Chinese government. However, after years of travelling and fulfilling association's goals, their return meanings have changed with their retirement from previous position as association leader. Their recent trips were more about spending time with family and friends, maximising their hedonic pleasure, enjoying local food, travelling around, and also “getting in touch” with themselves.

For instance, Russell (78, 1st generation Chinese-Canadian) was an entrepreneur in Vancouver. He inherited his father's legacy of being an association member and had been an active community member since the 1970s. He travelled back to China frequently between the 1980s and 1990s to represent his association for establishing networks with the local government (Figure 5).



He articulated how his past trips were mostly about bringing association members back to get connected in China:

“My first trip was in 1976. We travelled to Hong Kong and several cities in Guangdong. We worked hard to establish ties. I returned in 1980 again for the grand opening of the En Ping Qiao Lian Building. Our association donated money and constructed strong ties in Enping. After that we were invited back almost every year... Much of my travel [at that time] was for my association business, for networking... Sometimes I felt it was an obligation to do so, because I had to represent our association and Chinese migrants in Canada. Most of those trips were exhausted,

because we had to visit a lot of places, like Hong Kong, Enping, Guangzhou, Beijing, etc... we had to arrange Chunming [gala dinner for Chinese migrants], and other different types of events...”

However, Russell said he was no longer the association leader, and he enjoyed his retirement and home return trips more than before. His current trips were about enjoyment, pleasure, and family gatherings:

“Now I am no longer responsible. I travel more with my family and friends, sometimes during Christmas. We visit more places. Like last year we visited He Nan, Fo Shan, Jiangmen and Beijing... I felt good to bring my grandchildren back and let them see how their ancestral home looks like. They felt very touched during the trips. We were really happy about it. I feel the happiest to see not only my generation has a stronger concept of ancestral hometown, also my grandchildren’s generation that they can learn more about their roots.”

5. Discussions and conclusion

This study explores the process of fostering SWB via diasporic return by focusing on a much longer timeframe over the Chinese migrants’ life courses. We problematised the “complex taking-place of well-being” (Smith & Reid, 2017, p.808) and unpacked the previously assumed categories/components of measuring well-being by incorporating a temporal and dynamic view. Whilst diaspora tourism has long been portrayed as highly nuanced experience which can increase SWB through strengthening migrants’ home attachment and solving identity conflicts, our findings reveal a refined picture showing that more complex linkages exist between diasporic travel and SWB. This work opens up further debates over the conceptualisation of well-being in tourism studies in the following perspectives: what constitutes a desirable statement of well-being and self; how it is a part of dynamic and relational assemblage; and how it is time, culture, and place specific (Nordbakke & Schwanen, 2014; Smith & Reid, 2017).

5.1 Process of shaping SWB via diaspora tourism

Our findings first highlight that a migrant's statements of well-being and self are highly personal and they may change with home return travel over time. Given that each individual has unique migration background, childhood and adulthood experiences, personality traits, personal identity, and sense of place, how they construct own understanding towards well-being will be very likely to change with their aging process and under the influence of personal experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This is in line with Ryff's (1989, 1991) work on lifespan changes of well-being and the dynamic nature of personal conceptions of well-being. Thus, it will be difficult to capture how an individual fosters and changes the meanings and importance of his/her home return over life-course without a deep understanding of his/her personal definitions and changing constitutions of well-being.

The four scenarios identified from the participants' narratives suggest that how diasporic travel shapes SWB could be a provisional and on-going process under constant (re)negotiations, which is neither static nor stable. This process differs by the migrant's trip features, such as the number of return trips, breadth and depth of travel experience, age of his/her first and later return, on-site encounters, etc. How this process goes has so much uncertainty and possibilities, depending on the extent of the individual's early exposures to home place and culture, the meanings and values they attach to their trips and how those meanings and values transform, the way through which they respond to their encounters, and to what extent their trips help to fulfil their personal quests. These underlying factors further explain the linkages between diaspora tourism and SWB through the performative impacts of time, place, people, and events, which are rather complex and changing "becomings" (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011) whereby new actors (e.g. other diaspora tourists, new members from local community) may enter, new relations (e.g. new cooperative relationships with different geographical levels of the Chinese government) may forge, and new meanings (e.g. individualism or collectivism) may be produced. Therefore, the process becomes very difficult to generalise or measure by a list of components.

5.2 Dynamic effects of diasporic return

Along with the lifespan psychology literature on the dynamics of well-being (Sonnentag, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2001), this study further foregrounds the prominent role of time in the impacts of diasporic travel on SWB. Such role has not only been manifested through the fluctuated effects of home return over the tourists' life courses, but also by their ages of

return in terms of the level of maturation and aging process. For instance, diaspora tourists who returned at a younger age, e.g. childhood and adolescence, are more likely to relate their early return experience to a simply eye-opening event. Some had very limited exposures to ancestral home and culture, and lacked a thorough understanding of their home return travel. They had little mastery of their trips and their conceptions of well-being were under development and relatively naive. Thus, how their travel shapes SWB during this period would be mainly about how novel their trip experience was, and to what extent they were able to obtain new experience and knowledge. However, the impacts of their trips may not be limited to this. With time passes by, they become more educated and mature, and their exposures to home culture increase. Their return travel purposes are very likely to change afterwards, so do their perceptions of well-being and meanings of home return. With more followed trips, these individuals may gradually develop deeper meanings of their travel which lead to a more flourishing and self-discovery experience. The effects of their diasporic return could be gradually deepening, from a purely eye-opening and novelty-seeking experience to a much deeper experience in pursuit of personal growth, self-discovery, self-actualisation and eudaimonia.

By contrast, mature tourists are more likely to seek for the depth of home return, in terms of how the trips fulfil their quests, (re)produce life meanings, and how their travel helps to cope with the changes in their lives. Overtime, these individuals may experience less personal growth than younger tourists, whilst they will attach different meanings to their trips which are derived from and changed with personal experience, endeavours, and purposes in life. As a result, some may feel more affected by their trips, while the others feel that their trips are less meaningful. Some individuals will not be able to obtain gradually deepening experience, but a change from deepest encounter to more mundane practice over years. Here, their early return experiences, new expectations and purposes all play a part in shaping the impacts of followed trips. As such, how diasporic travel shapes well-being is a part of this relational and dynamic “taking- place”.

The findings also highlight the performative roles of place, people and major life events in assembling the dynamic “taking-place” of well-being in diasporic return. Some tourists highlighted significant life events in way of changing their thinking and shaping trip meanings and life purposes over time. Some referred to their very first home return trip as a major event in life, through which they have transformed their relationships with family, ancestral place, and people in hometown. Others recalled influential incidents occurred

during their trips as critical life events for forging new relationships with members from local community, which have completely changed their return meanings in later trips. Further, these tourists talked more about their relationships with places, and how their emotional, physical, and spiritual bonding with important places in life transform over life courses and affect their SWB. This represents a large part of their home return travel, showing that how diasporic return shapes their SWB is closely connected with the meanings of previous and present home, their negotiations of place attachment, and how they perform to maintain the bonding (Li & McKercher, 2016).

5.3 Incorporating a temporal view to the tourism-wellbeing linkages

Rethinking the linkages between tourism and well-being will require the researchers to go beyond the components of well-being and incorporate a temporal view to understanding how tourism shapes and reconfigures subjective experience of well-being. Current studies have largely relied on evidence from cross-sectional data, with only a few exceptions that examined the dynamic effects of tourism or vacation on well-being by using longitudinal data (e.g. Chen et al., 2013; Ouyang, Gursoy, & Chen, 2019). Much of this research, though, has reduced time into a series of disconnected time points, and referred to and compared tourists' ratings on well-being at these time points, or within a series of particular time periods or intervals. This approach is based on the assumption that smooth transitions usually occur between these data points and such transitions were interpreted as more or less gradual increase or decrease. However, anything could have happened between these data points and all sorts of irregularities in the patterns may have occurred during the gaps between the data points (Schwanen, 2015). This raised great challenges to apprehending how a given tourist's present, past and future are enfolded, and how their past condition and future expectations shape the present.

The biographical study of Chinese diaspora tourists represents an unprecedented attempt of incorporating a life-course perspective to examine the complexity and irregular changes that diasporic travel can bring to migrants' SWB over time. Unlike previous research which used longitudinal data by setting a predefined time frame for the respondents to assume the changes occurred, we see time as continuous and relational, and address this concern by allowing the participants to articulate their travel experiences, highlight meaningful events, and elaborate outcomes of these events in relation to their whole life. Our findings challenge

the assumption that smooth and simple (e.g. increase, decrease SWB) transitions occurred between time points, and reveal not only what happened during their return trips but also what and why they felt differently with multiple return trips across time.

With special consideration with time, how SWB is generated from tourism experience will not be framed as instantaneous or from one-time incident. The effects of an individual's travel experience can be posed to him/her over a certain period of time or over his/her life course, associated with his/her previous exposures to the destination, at what life stage they conduct their travel, and how they relate to their experience afterwards, their expectations, and even future prospects. Our findings encourage further debates over temporal variability in possible linkages between tourism and SWB.

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