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# NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE LIGHT OF CULTURE TOURISM APPLICATION OF THE REFLECTIONS OF SAINT JOHN PAUL II

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## **Abstract**

Nowadays, in such turbulent times, Europe and the world undergo changes in the thought of people, reflected also in their actions. Paradoxically, one may observe trends that are, as it were, antithetical: globalization on the one hand, and efforts to distinguish oneself leading to the deepening of national identities on the other. Uncommonly high immigration to Europe has also initiated and stirred up discussions of national identity, patriotism and national culture. State authorities declare their acceptance of multi-culturality and tolerance of living a life in a diversely cultural fashion. We are also witnesses of the building of global structures that seem to be indispensable for the survival of nations. On the other hand, more and more one may hear about initiatives and opinions leading to the strengthening of traditions and traditional culture peculiar to each nation. 'Return to the roots' is considered modern and trendy, which is also expressed in the social life, in the sectors of tourism, gastronomy, clothing, cultural traditions, etc. Both these antithetical tendencies constitute, as it were, a (repeated) search for the content of such concepts as nation, identity and culture. These interrelations were also addressed in the works and reflections of the saint Pope John Paul II. Not only a head of the Catholic Church, he was also a theologian, philosopher, politician, intellectual, and writer, deemed to be the most influential person of last century. The aim of the present paper is to search for interrelations with and apply the reflections of Saint John Paul II to the activities of culture tourism. Specifically tourism is a sector of economy which is in an extraordinarily intensive fashion associated with a culture of a country, with its history but also with such scientific fields as Sociology, Anthropology, Ethnology, Architecture, Art, and the like. The way people spend their leisure time, time for the relaxation and regeneration of their physical and mental strength, says a great deal about the character, identity and culture of a nation.

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## 1. Fundamental terms in the reflections of Saint John Paul II

The subjects of nation, culture, patriotism and national identity were addressed in a profound fashion in the works of Saint John Paul II, who did so initially as a student of Polish studies, later of foreign languages, then as an ecclesiastical figure and finally as a Pope and a statesman. His most important works dedicated to this subject include above all *Memory and Identity* and his Address to UNESCO ‘On the Role of Culture in the Lives of Nations’, delivered on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1980. Equally important are his addresses to individual nations occasioned by his pastoral visits around the world (he made above 100 foreign trips). In drafting his addresses, he would draw on the history of the visited countries and nations. His messages to members of governments, representatives of civil life and citizens were based on historical events [1]. He is considered a unique personality in the history due to the effort he devoted during his papacy to draw different nations and religions together. Especially at his heart was the well-being of each nation.

In his works, he closely interrelates, or even intertwines, the earthly and heavenly native lands. “In its original sense [the native land] means what we have inherited from our fathers and mothers on earth. The inheritance we receive from Christ orientates the patrimony of human native lands and cultures towards the eternal homeland.” [2] From this close interconnectedness of the earthly and heavenly native lands he derives the Christian roots of the European culture, because culture is essentially intertwined with history.

In defining the concept of culture, John Paul II first draws on the concept of native land. Native land (from the Latin *patria*, literally the fatherland) is related to the concept and reality of the father. “The native land (or fatherland) can in some ways be identified with patrimony, that is, the totality of goods bequeathed to us by our forefathers. In this context it is significant that one frequently hears the expression ‘motherland’.” [2, p. 64] In the Slovak language, there are also archaic names for the native land such as *dedovizeň*, *babovizeň* (‘grandfatherland’ ‘grandmotherland’). “Therefore, the native land is a patrimony and also a status of ownership flowing from the patrimony – firstly of territory, but even more so of the spiritual values and content making up the culture of a given nation. The concept of native land comprises a profound connection between the spiritual and the material, between culture and territory.” [John Paul II, *Address to UNESCO*, 13.04.2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1980/june/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19800602\\_unesco.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1980/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19800602_unesco.html)] By native land he also understands “the common good of all citizens and as such it imposes a serious duty... and complex reality, in the service of which social structures have evolved and continue to evolve, starting from primitive tribal traditions” [2, p. 70].

A concept closely related to the existence of native land is patriotism. John Paul II deems patriotism a moral value. It is a kind of relationship expressed in Latin by the term *pietas* which emphasizes a religious dimension involved in the due respect to the parents. Patriotism adopts this inner attitude

towards the native land which is a mother to all. "Patriotism is a love for everything to do with our native land: its history, its traditions, its language, its natural features. It is a love which extends also to the works of our compatriots and the fruits of their genius." [2, p. 69] However, John Paul II emphasizes that this love for one's native land cannot be confused with nationalism, which excludes goodness and uniqueness of other nations and nationalities. As opposed to nationalism, patriotism respects uniqueness of other nations, treating them with admiration and, above all, acknowledging the same rights to all nations as to one's own. "Patriotism, in other words, leads to a properly ordered social love." [2, p. 71]

From native land, John Paul II moves to the concept of culture. In general, culture may be understood as a human manner of organizing, realizing and developing activities and is objectified in both material and immaterial products of human activity. In other words, culture also means working, cultivating or developing of anything which is a work of man. Reflecting on culture, John Paul II mentions: "the culture's historical roots" [2, p. 67], because culture is historical in its nature, it unfolds in history. Not only in the sense that all creature is subject to the flow of time, but also in the political history. Nations identify their histories in historical documents, ethnographies, and pass them to the next generations. Very often nations preserve these works with great care, because they constitute great wealth for them [3]. Not only men, but nations also have their memory, and, according to John Paul II, they are even capable of objectifying their history. Subsequently, these historical documents form their own culture. "The principal instrument of this process [of the preservation of culture] is language... in this way, communication takes place, leading to greater knowledge of the truth and thereby deepening and consolidating the identities of the respective interlocutors" [2, p. 79]. Culture is also closely related to nation. John Paul II even affirms that a nation is born, arises from culture. He deduces the content of the concept of culture from God's intent with man as to the stewardship of the created world: to "subdue it" (Genesis 1.31). He also understands these words as the "earliest and most complete definition of human culture" [2, p. 82]. Also important is the fact that "every nation draws life from the works of its own culture" [2, p. 84].

For John Paul II, the concepts of native land, culture, and patriotism form a basis for the grasp of the concept of identity. This is an extraordinarily comprehensive and complex concept because it comprises such terms as nation, native land, patriotism, history, language, culture, and the like. "The cultural and historical identity of any society is preserved and nourished by all that is contained within this concept of nation." [2, p. 71] "The term nation designates a community based in a given territory and distinguished from other nations by its culture. The nation is the ground on which the State is born." [2, p. 73] Nations eternalize their history by codifying it in various forms and passing it to further generations (most often in the textual form, but nowadays also in modern ways, such as film, photograph, and the like). For the identity of each nation, the substantial and decisive element is its culture. From the viewpoint of time,

culture and history may be objectified. Not only each person, but also each nation is capable of self-reflection on its own history and culture. The Catholic social doctrine, which John Paul II identifies with, speaks „of natural societies, indicating that both the family and the nation have a particular bond with human nature, which has a social dimension” [2, p. 70]. Moreover, it is important to add that national identity „finds its expression in culture and, at the same time, national identity is formed through culture” [[http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1980/june/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19800602\\_unesco.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1980/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19800602_unesco.html)].

## **2. The search for and perception of the national and cultural identity of Slovakia**

The present paper addresses chiefly the perception of the national identity by the contemporaries, above all in the context of culture tourism. Yet it is impossible not to mention, at least very briefly, the early beginnings of the formation of the Slovak nation’s culture which are closely associated with the coming of Saints Cyril and Methodius to the territory of Great Moravia (and also to that of the present Slovakia). In his encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*, John Paul II deems these apostles unique because “[t]he work of evangelization which they carried out as pioneers in territory inhabited by Slav peoples contains... a model of what today is called ‘inculturation’ the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures...” [John Paul II, *Slavorum Apostoli*, 13.04.2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_19850602\\_slavorum-apostoli.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_19850602_slavorum-apostoli.html)]. He goes on by saying that “[they] were especially meritorious for the formation and development of... culture” and that “all the cultures of the Slav nations owe their ‘beginning’ or development to the work of the Brothers from Salonika” [[http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_19850602\\_slavorum-apostoli.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_19850602_slavorum-apostoli.html)]. This tradition of Ss. Cyril and Methodius – the historical and cultural legacy of the apostles – is referenced in the Preamble to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.

The most recent history is marked with turbulent changes in politics following the fall of the communist regime after 1989 in Slovakia and other post-communist countries in the Central and Eastern Europe, which resulted in, among other things, a (repeated) search for Slovak national identity and culture. In its heterogeneous, ethnically and confessionally varied population structure, Slovakia is a typical Central European country. “As a result of its specific historical development, it has retained this variety more than the surrounding countries. The process of forming the modern Slovak nation, which is related to the overlap of the national and state identities, was shifted in time as compared to the neighbouring nations.” [Inštitút pre verejné otázky, *Vízia vývoja Slovenskej republiky do roku 2020, 16 Kapitola: Národná identita a kultúra, národné a štátne záujmy*, 27.01.2017, <http://archiv.vlada.gov.sk/old.uv/6613/vizia-vyvoja-slovenskej-republiky-do-roku-2020-institut-pre-verejne-otazky.html>] Up to the present day, in the society at large, one may observe the process

of “searching for the collective identity by means of reconstruction of the cultural memory” [4]. For Slovakia, an important milestone was the integration into European structures and its existence in this community. This fact was recently confirmed in relation to the Slovak presidency of the Council of the European Union (in the latter half of 2016) when the state authorities undertook several initiatives and activities in order to search for the very content and unified presentation of the country towards foreign countries. There was a large project of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic called the Branding of Slovakia. Its main aim was to identify a „set of attractive, credible communication messages and their graphic representations to be identified with by the relevant domestic persons and to assist in the creating of the positive image of Slovakia abroad“ [Ministerstvo zahraničných vecí a európskych záležitostí SR, *Branding Slovenska: od ideového konceptu k posolstvám a komunikácii*, 30.01.2017, [https://www.mzv.sk/documents/10182/12495/BRANDING\\_SLOVENSKA\\_studia\\_komunikacne\\_posolstva.pdf/675019fa-077d-45ea-9b38-3b01bb71d566](https://www.mzv.sk/documents/10182/12495/BRANDING_SLOVENSKA_studia_komunikacne_posolstva.pdf/675019fa-077d-45ea-9b38-3b01bb71d566)]. This seems to manifest the effort to search again for, or rather confirm, the national and cultural identity of Slovakia. The aim of the ‚branding of Slovakia‘ project is to cover the foreign publicity of the country in such areas as tourism, influx of foreign investments, and is supposed to assist in building of the country’s image.

### **3. The preservation and forming of national identity from the viewpoint of tourism**

National identity cannot be considered an immutable characteristic of any nation. Not only are histories of nations in constant flux, but also the nation’s attitudes to the past events are capable of objectification. As mentioned above, a national identity is a complex reality involving such partial areas as nation, native land, patriotism, history, language, culture, and the like. It may only be grasped based on a search for an overlap of multiple aspects of the life of the nation.

It may be said that in the history of nations, there is constant rediscovery, identification with the national identity and objectification of the national history, coming hand in hand with each new generation. John Paul II attaches a crucial importance to family in all aspects, including the context of national identity. Family has its culture, it is a school of culturedness, family has its roots and history, family is a basic unit of nation, family is the first native land (patria, fatherland), family is also a school of love for the homeland (patriotism). Traditionally, these values are passed over in families above all by the witness of life, which is also the most credible. Most often it is performed by oral traditions containing the history of the family in the context of historical events, education to traditional celebrations, passing of experience or event of craft to the following generations and the like.

The present time – its culture and lifestyle, leisure time, the available material background of the present society etc. – also brings further, new possibilities of passing and preserving values, both material and spiritual. Getting to know, managing and marketing historical heritage and cultural wealth is the content of tourism as a distinct sector of economy (this sector is a distinct discipline belonging to a subgroup of the social science: economic science and business). In other words, the content of the concept of tourism also includes a partial aspect of the view of the national identity. It inquires into the behaviour and activities of a nation – individuals and households in their leisure time, but also into the behaviour of businesses that create an offer of tourism services and products. The very beginnings of tourism go back to the period of ancient Greece and Rome. Yet, a more significant increase in tourism activities may be observed after 313 when Emperor Constantine the Great first legalized and officially recognized Christianity by the so-called Edict of Milan. This marks the beginning of the rise in religious tourism, mainly to the region of Middle East, to the places of the life and death of Jesus Christ. From this historical period, one may date the beginnings of culture tourism.

What is the core, the basis of culture tourism? According to John Paul II, culture is based on the emergence of the first pair of Adam and Eve, about whom an Old Testament author said: “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1.31). “This is what lies at the very heart of culture that is expressed in works of art, whether they be paintings, sculptures, buildings, pieces of music or other products of creative imagination and thought.” [2, p. 84] “Culture may be seen as something inspired by a certain system of values which unifies, inspires and motivates a certain group or community, leading it in a certain direction. A culture inspired by a system of values means refinement, elevation, correction, perfection and cultivation of man. And in turn, man influenced by such cultural context creates culture, and through it creates, reproduces, distributes and consumes certain values.” [5]

Approximately in late 1970s, there occurred an identification of a new, continuously growing segment of tourists who travelled specifically with the intent to get to know the culture and cultural heritage of a given destination in a more profound fashion [6]. After some time, it may be observed that this trend is becoming mainstream. According to OECD, “cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing global tourism markets” [OECD, *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*, 4.05.2017, [http://www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/naratourismstatisticsweek/statistical/pdf/2009\\_The\\_Impact.pdf](http://www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/naratourismstatisticsweek/statistical/pdf/2009_The_Impact.pdf)]. Different studies show that 35-80% of all tourists are culture tourists (depending on the methodology used for calculation). The literature offers a wide range of definitions of culture tourism. For illustration, we quote the definition of culture tourism by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) describing it as “the movement of persons to cultural attractions in cities in countries other than their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs and all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and

drama to cities outside their normal country of residence” [7]. The range of cultural tourism activities is very wide [8]. Table 1 offers a synthesis of the categorisation of the cultural tourism services and products.

**Table 1.** Categorisation of the cultural tourism services and products [8].

<b>Category</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<i>Built and areas</i>	Built attractions, adaptive reuse of extant facilities	Theme parks, museums, cultural centres, conversion of historic sites to tourist attractions, war memorials, war sites, genocide sites, prisons, etc.
<i>Economic objects</i>	Tangible and intangible heritage associated with agriculture, industry, etc.	Industrial heritage, attraction based on primary production (forestry, mining, etc.), farms and farm museums, agricultural practices, vineyards, distilleries, wineries, etc.
<i>Transport objects</i>	Transport, infrastructure or superstructure	Canals, maritime structures, ships, cars, railways, bridges, roads, dams
<i>Cultural territory</i>	Combined tangible and intangible features	Historic towns, seaside resorts, industrial zones, linear or circular touring routes, precincts
<i>Creative industries</i>	Arts, performance, etc.	Dance, performance, popular culture, theatre, literature, film, events and festival focusing on creative industries, etc.
<i>Religious aspects</i>	Tangible and intangible artefacts and practices	Religious sites, churches, mosques, sacred sites, relics, religious practices, religious festivals and events
<i>Intangible heritage</i>	Features (combined with some tangible) that reflect living cultures	Tradition, customs, folklore, oral traditions, voices, ceremonies, famous people, food, wine, local markets, sports
<i>Nature heritage</i>	Cultural tourism associated with and defined by natural landscapes	Conservation areas, botanic gardens, zoos, wildlife and associated cultural practices
<i>Other</i>	Prehistoric, historic and contemporary built heritage not transformed for touristic use; e. g. non touristic built, diaspora ethnic, ...	Forts, castles, archaeological sites, ruins, historic houses, ethnic festivals in migrant countries, ethnic foods, etc.

In all the above categories of culture tourism one may find potential represented by both the material and immaterial wealth of countries and nations. This potential is a subject of interest not only of its own nation but also of other nations. The assumption that cultural tourism plays an important role in getting to know and identifying with the national identity is true, if: 1) due care of the cultural wealth is assured; and 2) there is a dedicated public policy supporting attendance and sustainability.

All the aspects of culture tourism are needed to form a basis for the building of branding of a tourist destination. Branding is a “process where name and identity are designed, planned and communicated in such manner, that creates and manages the reputation of an entity” [9]. Thus, based on the knowledge of the character of a product (a good, service, tourist destination and the like), its task and mission is to identify the product’s difference from other similar products [10]. Branding may be closest to the marketing theory and thus its aim is to draw attention to a product or service and to work systematically on its sustainability on the market. Very often, the term branding is associated with such terms as ‘national’, ‘regional’, ‘local/city’ and the like. Branding is a modern term whose content is passing and presentation of the identity of a nation to other communities, nations or institutions using:

- (1) contemporary, modern language – relevant terminology reflecting the present time;
- (2) modern means of communication including such media as the Internet, social networks, new media, etc.;
- (3) visual form – an effort to transform identity into an apt brand, logo.

In the process of its presentation to the public, the most commonly used marketing communication tool is that of public relation whose aim is to build “brand awareness, reputation, and loyalty; and to build up reputation, increase loyalty, or support the awareness of more profound values” [11].

#### **4. Conclusions**

The above shows that culture tourism is an important social activity through which the domestic population is educated, identified and strengthened in the perception and experiencing its national identity. It results in a desire to present one’s culture and spread its values further. Thus another level is attained: culture tourism becomes a unique form and means of presenting and passing one’s own wealth to other nations.

An identity of a nation is initially formed already in historical moments, at the early beginnings of its formation. If members of a nation are also patriots, they are aware of their value flowing from the heritage of the fathers. It is precisely this ‘heritage of the fathers’ that culture tourism is interested in. The relation and overlap of national identity and culture tourism offers a new perspective not only for the makers of national policies, but also for tourism businesses in creating an offer of tourism services and products. Culture tourism inquires into the demand on the tourism market, which is very often a driving force and motive for demanding restoration and reconstruction works of material objects important for a nation. Currently, one may observe an increased interest in spiritual values: local, regional or national customs, traditions, art, culture, gastronomy and the like, which manifests that uniqueness of nations enriches and inspires other national communities. It also inquires into relationships associated with the content and form of marketing activities. Therefore, in his very essence, man is a being closely related to his native land. For him, the

culture of his own nation but also that of the other nations is a source of enthusiasm and inspiration.

For John Paul II, who is considered the most prominent personality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the issues of national identity and culture were crucially important and he perceived them as closely related to family which is the fundamental unit of human society. As a patriot (in many interviews he professed his love for his native land), he was also capable of loving other nations (well-known is his address occasioned by his visit to Mexico beginning with the words "...since I love Poland, I also love Mexico..."). He was a great thinker of the last century with the well-being of every culture, every nation and every person close to his heart.

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