

## **TOURISM BASED ON NATIONAL VALUES AS A TOOL OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS**

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### **Abstract**

The present article conducts an analysis of tourism from the perspective of national values, positing its efficacy as a means for the implementation of cultural diplomacy. The potential for nations to showcase their culture, history, and values on the international stage is significant, and the influence of “soft power” through tourism can be a catalyst for strengthening diplomatic relations. The article examines the integration of national values into tourism policies, drawing upon examples from countries including Japan, Italy, India, Egypt, China, and Uzbekistan. Moreover, it engages with a range of ethical and moral issues, including the commercialization of cultural heritage, the preservation of authenticity, and the involvement of local communities. The article identifies the theoretical foundations, philosophical approaches, and practical development directions for tourism based on national values.

**Keywords:** National values, tourism, cultural diplomacy, soft power, cultural authenticity, cultural heritage, public diplomacy, intercultural dialogue and international experience.

### **Introduction**

Tourism has traditionally been considered an important driver of economic development for countries. However, in recent years, it has been studied not only as an economic asset but also as an important component of foreign policy and cultural influence. As cultural diplomacy increasingly takes its place as a strategic tool on the global stage, tourism is emerging as a powerful means for promoting a country's cultural heritage, strengthening its national image, and enhancing international cooperation.

This emerging trend – the concept of tourism based on national values – holds significant importance within the frameworks of the “soft power” theory (Nye, 2004) and the concept of cultural diplomacy (Snow, 2010), as it facilitates the transmission of a nation’s cultural identity and moral values to international tourists. Through this approach, states can utilize their cultural assets as strategic tools to shape global perceptions, strengthen diplomatic relations, and promote cross-cultural dialogue.

The concept of tourism based on values is regarded as a potential avenue for expanding the scope of traditional diplomacy, functioning as a medium for cultural communication that can elevate intercultural dialogue to a new level. This approach fosters cultural experiences shaped by individual impressions and interpersonal perceptions among diverse peoples. Such interactions have been identified as a crucial factor in the strengthening of mutual understanding, trust, and cultural convergence. Consequently, values-based tourism is recognized as a strategic mechanism for promoting national cultural identity on an international scale, ensuring sustainable cultural exchange, and supporting global peace.

Consequently, values-based tourism can be evaluated not only as a tool for achieving economic efficiency but also as an effective mechanism of cultural diplomacy that fosters the development of international cultural relations. Through the implementation of values-based tourism, nations are presented with the opportunity to effectively showcase their national values and cultural heritage to an international audience.

The primary aim of this article is to analyze the theoretical and practical foundations of value-based tourism as a tool of cultural diplomacy, to identify its role within the system of international relations, to explore the mechanisms of cultural influence exercised through tourism, and to assess the future prospects for the development of this concept.

The article outlines the following key objectives:

- To analyze the philosophical and political-scientific foundations of values-based tourism.
- To examine the role of tourism in cultural diplomacy through international case studies.
- To highlight ethical challenges in promoting cultural heritage and national values through tourism.

- To develop recommendations for the future development of values-based tourism.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research has been conducted using an analytical approach, drawing on various interdisciplinary methods from the fields of cultural diplomacy, tourism, and international relations. The experiences of countries such as Japan, Italy, Egypt, India, China, and Uzbekistan have been examined through a comparative case study approach, as these nations effectively integrate their national values into tourism policy and practice cultural diplomacy.

Additionally, the study analyzes how value-based tourism functions as a non-coercive tool of influence in international politics, based on Joseph Nye's "soft power" theory (Nye, 2004) and Nancy Snow's concept of cultural diplomacy (Snow, 2010). A comprehensive analysis of scientific literature and sources related to tourism policy has been undertaken.

In addition, data from national tourism agencies, tourism policy documents, and empirical data published in international relations academic journals have been utilized in this research to comprehensively explore the economic and diplomatic impacts of tourism.

The research also evaluates the ethical and moral dimensions of utilising cultural heritage in tourism from a philosophical perspective. Central questions addressed in this process include: How can a balance be maintained between preserving cultural authenticity and commercialization? How can the risks of cultural appropriation be mitigated? How can local communities' benefit from tourism while preserving their cultural traditions? Detailed analysis and solutions to these questions will be discussed in the subsequent sections of the article.

## **RESULTS**

### **National Values as "Soft Power": A Philosophical Analysis**

The notion of "soft power", as conceptualised by Joseph Nye (2004), provides a foundational theoretical framework for comprehending the diplomatic potential of values-based tourism. Soft power involves influencing others not through coercion or economic interests, but by attraction and persuasion. In this process, cultural influence, universal human values, and ideals shape a positive perception within

the international community. The concept of values-based tourism can be considered a practical manifestation of this “soft power”.

From a philosophical perspective, the influence exerted through tourism is closely intertwined with concepts of cultural identity, authenticity, and global citizenship. When countries promote their culture through tourism, they enhance the global community’s interest in and respect for the values and history of other nations. This approach is particularly valuable in addressing global challenges, resolving conflicts, and strengthening peace.

For instance, Japan promotes philosophical values such as “peace”, “stability” and “mindful living” through tourism by showcasing practices like Zen Buddhism, traditional tea ceremonies, and other cultural traditions. These practices are integral to Japan’s national identity and contribute to creating a positive cultural image globally (Zen Buddhism and Meditation in Japan). Similarly, Italy presents its Renaissance-era art and architecture as part of global human heritage, positioning itself as a key contributor to the development of Western civilization. The historical and cultural influence of Italy’s Renaissance period is conveyed through tourism, with the era’s scientific, artistic, and cultural revolutions serving as a source of inspiration for humanity.

### **Cultural Heritage Diplomacy: The Construction of Links between National Identities**

Cultural diplomacy utilizes a country’s tangible and intangible heritage as an active tool of influence in international communication. Tangible cultural heritage – such as monuments, museums, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites – represents a country’s history, aesthetic values, and traditions in the form of material symbols. These sites are not only tourist destinations but also serve as symbols of national pride and identity, functioning as diplomatic “visiting cards.” Examples include the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Colosseum in Rome, and the Registan in Samarkand.

At the same time, intangible heritage – such as traditional music, national festivals, religious ceremonies, and customs – also plays a crucial role in cultural diplomacy. Festivals like Diwali or Holi in India, sacred cities such as Varanasi, and the celebration of Navruz in Uzbekistan provide tourists with opportunities to engage directly with a nation’s spiritual values and traditions.

As Edward Said (1978) emphasized, such cultural symbols are not merely “frozen historical monuments,” but integral, dynamic, and evolving components of a nation’s living narrative. Through value-based tourism, these symbols transform into interactive diplomatic tools, engaging visitors in the processes of cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

### **Economic and Diplomatic Impact: The Potential of Value-Based Tourism**

Value-based tourism holds significant importance not only from a cultural but also from an economic perspective. It directly contributes to a country’s economy while simultaneously strengthening international diplomatic relations. According to data from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), global tourism grows at an average rate of 4-5% annually, with developing countries particularly effectively utilizing their cultural heritage to attract international tourists (UNWTO, 2019).

For example, Egypt generates substantial tourism revenue through its ancient historical landmarks – such as the Pyramids of Giza, the Sphinx and the Valley of the Kings (Exploring Egypt) while positioning itself as a global center of cultural diplomacy. Similarly, India’s spiritual and pilgrimage tourism, through visits to sacred sites and religious destinations, not only brings significant economic benefits but also enhances the country’s international diplomatic image. Moreover, the establishment of the “Great Silk Road” international tourism center in Samarkand, and its transformation into Uzbekistan’s “tourism gateway” have positively impacted the country's standing in international relations and its role in cultural diplomacy.

Value-based tourism serves as an effective tool for enhancing diplomatic influence, improving a nation’s international image, and creating opportunities for new collaborations in sectors such as trade, education, investment, and cultural exchange. Thus, it is not only a catalyst for economic development but also a vital strategic diplomatic mechanism.

## DISCUSSION

### Ethics in Cultural Tourism: Balancing Cultural Authenticity and Commercialization

Ensuring the effectiveness of value-based tourism while addressing the risks of excessive commercialization is a critical concern. In the context of increasingly complex globalization processes, cultural tourism raises pressing questions about maintaining the authenticity of national cultural practices and values, while simultaneously transforming them into sources of economic benefit. This tension brings to the forefront numerous academic and practical issues related to heritage preservation, commercialization, and the sustainable development of tourism.

The practice of values-based tourism has been demonstrated to result in the presentation of cultural practices in simplified and commercialised forms. This process can result in a detachment of these practices from their original meaning and historical context. In some cases, it even leads to the reconstruction of culture as “exotic”, whereby artificial cultural templates are created to cater to tourist expectations (Stapanov, 2001). Consequently, the cultural content offered to tourists may not fully reflect the spiritual worldview or historical legacy of the host community and, in certain situations, may generate entirely misleading impressions.

From a philosophical perspective, these issues can be analyzed through the concepts of “cultural appropriation” and “cultural freedom” based on their moral and ethical criteria, which provides a deeper understanding of the problem.

“Cultural appropriation” refers to the adoption of cultural elements by representatives of another culture, often under conditions of social and economic dominance, leading to the detachment of these elements from their original meaning and their re-presentation for commercial or mass consumption purposes. This process is often associated with cultural asymmetry, non-traditional interpretations, and the commercial exploitation of cultural resources. In cases of cultural appropriation, the moral conflicts and legal issues arising from the appropriation of another culture can damage the cultural heritage of other peoples and communities.



On the other hand, “cultural freedom” refers to the right of each community to freely express, preserve, and present its culture to others in the correct context. This concept, in turn, implies that cultural objects and practices should be valued according to legal and ethical principles. Ensuring cultural freedom enables communities to express their history and values freely and accurately, while also guaranteeing the protection of their cultural rights.

In analyzing the relationship between the two concepts, cultural freedom is presented as a better approach in relation to cultural appropriation, as it fosters respect and mutual understanding between cultures. The protection of cultural freedom, in turn, serves to ensure equality and justice among cultures.

The primary objective in promoting cultural heritage through tourism is to maintain a balance between economic interests and spiritual values, without compromising its true meaning and historical context. An effective method for achieving this goal is the development and consistent implementation of sustainable tourism strategies. Sustainable tourism, particularly through approaches based on community participation, yields effective results. In this process, cooperation between local populations, civil society institutions, and state authorities is of crucial importance. Such an approach maintains a balance between cultural needs, the community’s spiritual objectives, and economic benefits. Furthermore, it supports the preservation, restoration, and transmission of cultural heritage from generation to generation.

Additionally, in addressing the moral and ethical issues related to the commercialization of cultural heritage, the philosophical consciousness and social responsibility of the community play a significant role. If cultural tourism is directed in a manner that balances both moral and economic interests, tourists will not only become cultural spectators but also cultural researchers – allowing them the opportunity to study, understand, and appreciate the culture more deeply.

### **Cultural Diplomacy and Intercultural Relations in the Context of Tourism**

Value-based tourism, as an important element of cultural diplomacy, serves to foster intercultural dialogue and respect. Tourism helps to highlight humanitarian exchanges between countries and promote their shared values. This, in turn, forms an important foundation for establishing international cooperation and peace.

Cultural exchanges carried out through tourism help to ensure long-term trust and sustainable development between states.

The significance of tourism in cultural diplomacy should be emphasized. Tourism actively contributes to the development of states' public diplomacy, having a positive impact not only between governments but also between people. As a result, exchanges based on cultural tourism facilitate the transformation of relations between countries, leading to changes in diplomatic decisions and political directions. Moreover, tourism helps to establish direct communications, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among people.

The use of cultural heritage is not only for economic benefit but also a moral duty to protect, study, and pass it on to future generations. Cultural practices should be introduced to the world openly, based on respect and responsibility. This serves to build bridges of cultural exchange and unite common values between nations.

Through cultural tourism, diplomacy becomes an important tool in the "public diplomacy" of states. In such diplomacy, the primary connections occur not between governments, but between ordinary citizens and communities. This creates an opportunity to strengthen diplomatic relations through humanitarianism, cultural proximity, and mutual understanding. "Public diplomacy" fosters long-term, stable, and trust-based relationships. Mellissen (2005) distinguishes public diplomacy from traditional diplomacy, emphasizing that it involves more public engagement to influence international relations.

Cultural diplomacy carried out through value-based tourism plays a crucial role in fostering new models of global cooperation. Furthermore, the protection and promotion of cultural heritage are among the fundamental goals of both tourism and diplomacy, as this process necessitates collective efforts to preserve cultural values and traditions while channeling them toward sustainable development.

### **Promising Directions of Tourism Based on National Values**

The success of cultural diplomacy is primarily dependent on the authentic and responsible representation of values conveyed through tourism. For this, countries must view tourism not only as a source of economic benefit but also as a means to protect their national cultural heritage. Tourism policies must be based on mechanisms that strengthen the rights and opportunities of local populations, consider public interests, and ensure ecological and cultural sustainability. In



ensuring the sustainability of cultural tourism, tourism strategies should focus on protecting the interests and values of local communities, while developing tourism models that align with their cultural needs.

Moreover, tourism based on national values should be viewed as a strategic asset for countries to exert influence in global political processes through “soft power”. International cooperation built through culture is inherently long-term, stable, and based on mutual trust. Developing this potential in tourism provides states with the opportunity to establish a positive image and increase their influence on the global stage.

## CONCLUSION

Tourism based on national values is not merely an economic activity or a cultural consumption object, but rather a modern and effective form of exerting influence on the international stage. It is emerging as an important tool for countries to implement their “soft power” potential and achieve mutual understanding through culture in foreign policy.

This analysis shows that through tourism based on national values, countries can enhance their diplomatic standing and strengthen their participation on the global stage by conveying their cultural heritage, historical values, and philosophical perspectives to the international community. Tourism, as a practical mechanism of cultural diplomacy, not only showcases cultural symbols but also strengthens human relations, fostering the foundations of mutual respect and cooperation.

Thus, when tourism is built on national values, it not only ensures economic growth but also becomes a powerful tool for the implementation of cultural diplomacy. This tool enables the shaping of a country’s image and the deepening of diplomatic relations through the influence of “soft power” in international relations.

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