

CANCEL CULTURE IN CONSTRUCTING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE CASPIAN MACRO-REGION (BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF TEXTBOOKS IN KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKMENISTAN)¹

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Abstract. The process of the formation of independent states on the territories of post-Soviet republics raised the problem of the construction of their national identities. This process was propelled by the rejection of Soviet identity and the cultural legacy of the Soviet era. This rejection necessitated a reinterpretation of the historical past of the nations and a revision of the pantheon of national heroes. And the mechanism of cancel culture was used to achieve this. In general, the goal of cancel culture is to reject the values of a given culture and construct a new worldview. In this paper, we are interested in the Caspian macro-region, a geopolitically and economically attractive area not only for the five international actors that have access to the water area here (Russia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, and Azerbaijan), but also for more distant states (China, Turkey, the United States, and leading European countries), all of which fight for influence in the Caspian basin. The Caspian region is a zone of heightened tension, where conflicts erupt from time to time (involving Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Iran, etc.). Thus, the study of the process of national identity construction in each country individually, as well as in the region as a whole, is not only a matter of scientific interest, but it is also a strategic task to ensure the security of the Caspian region, of which Russia is a part. The main purpose of this article is to analyse the mechanisms of constructing a new national identity in the Caspian countries through cancel culture, reconsidering their experience and historical development. This process can be seen most clearly in the example of changes in the education systems of the countries of the Caspian region. To conduct a comparative analysis, we took history and local history textbooks from secondary schools and institutions of higher education in the republics

¹ English translation from the Russian text: Khlyshcheva E. V., Tikhonova V. L. 2023. «Kul'tura otmeny» kak mekhanizm konstruirovaniya nacional'noj identichnosti stran kaspiskogo makroregiona (na primere analiza uchebnoj literatury Kazhstana i Turkmenistana) [Cancel Culture in Constructing the National Identity of the Countries in the Caspian Macro-Region]. *Koncept: filosofiya, religiya, kul'tura* [Concept: Philosophy, Religion, Culture]. 7(2). P. 104–123. (In Russian). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24833/2541-8831-2023-2-26-104-123>

of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The research was limited to the study of textbooks published in the Russian language. The selection was made by random sampling. This paper marks the first in a series of research projects on the construction of national identity in the post-Soviet space through the mechanism of cancel culture, presenting the results of the study of two countries in the Caspian Sea region – Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Keywords: cancel culture, identity, transformation, academic disciplines, cultural security, Caspian region, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan

Acknowledgements: The study was carried out under Russian Science Foundation Grant No. 22-18-00301 "The Process of Constructing New Identities in the Caspian Macro-Region in the Context of Societal Security."

Cancel culture is a modern form of social ostracism. As we all know, the concept first appeared in the media discourse of the United States and European countries and was quickly adopted around the world. Initially, cancel culture was associated with the crusades of social activists, online communities, and the spontaneous expression of public opinion – in other words, it came “from below,” rather than “from above.” Such actions can be seen as a form of boycott of an individual or community. The meaning of “cancellation” was that the targeted individual or community was deprived of public recognition and support, that they were “cancelled” by society. Recent history has shown us that this kind of mass boycott can indeed destroy a person’s reputation, have them lose their job, or even their freedom (if facts are found that confirm words or deeds that are not only morally reprehensible, but also illegal). Time and again, “being cancelled” has led to nosedives in sales of major brands, which then use the harm caused to their reputations to “sterilize” the moral climate with aggressive anti-marketing techniques. The mechanism of cancellation² soon spread to issues that affect society as a whole – the environment, minority rights, violence, religious conflicts, etc.

Differences in Word Usage in “Western” and “Non-Western” Discourse

In Russia, the term “cancellation” is not used as widely as it is in the West. This is perhaps why many Russian researchers believe that “‘cancel culture’ does not exist in Russia in the form that it exists in Western countries. Nor will it in the foreseeable future” (Cancel Culture: Reasons... 2022: 66). This can be explained by the fact that the

² The transliteration «кэнселлинг»/«канселлинг» [cancelling/cancellation] entered publicistic usage and scientific discourse alongside the translation of the expression “cancel culture” as «культура отмены». Throughout this article, we will use these terms interchangeably, although in contemporary academic literature, particularly in journalism, a distinction (and sometimes even opposition) between them has emerged. In our opinion, this phenomenon undoubtedly possesses its own country-specific and cultural characteristics; however, the core meaning – “boycott” – remains unchanged across all transformations.

Russian consumer does not demonstrate the same level of interest in the moral principles of companies and brands, being more concerned with the problems of everyday life. It is no coincidence that “cancel culture” has come to be called “the new ethics” in Russia. The term has not caught on, however, as it is more readily associated with “politeness and ethics of communication, social equality, and respect for people of other nationalities.”³

However, Russia had its own version of “cancel culture” long before the term was even created. Examples include the “cancellation” of individual political and cultural figures – writers, artists, musicians, actors, etc. Back in Soviet times, the names of disgraced politicians were removed from textbooks, and their works and archival footage of them were pulled from circulation. Later, films starring actors who had been “cancelled” were “banned.” This was most noticeable in connection with actors who had emigrated abroad during Soviet times (for example, Savely Kramarov, Oleg Vidov, and Lev Krugly) (Cancel Culture: Reasons... 2022: 67). Other examples of cancellation include the demolition of monuments after the October Revolution of 1917 and the transfer of power in later periods. These examples of “cancellation” initially contained an element of spontaneous protest; however, they were subsequently carried out systematically, initiated “from above,” that is, not by “the people,” on whose behalf they were supposedly carried out, but on behalf of state structures.

It has become common around the world in recent times to use the cancel culture mechanism to apply political pressure and impose sanctions on certain public figures, countries, cultures, and subcultures, and even entire historical periods. Cancel culture, regardless of who initiates it, is increasingly becoming a weapon in the fight against dissenters and detractors. For example, Russophobia in the West has led to attempts to cancel Russian culture, which automatically takes “cancelling” from the realm of public debate to global politics. In such cases, cancellation moves beyond the space of internal problems and can be positioned as an “existential threat to the security of the nation” (Chugrov 2022: 91).

This use of cancelling is more typical for Western societies, but the process of transformation of the political structure of the former Soviet republics and the formation of a national identity, which began with the rewriting of history in the 1990s, are now resorting to cancellation mechanisms too. In this case, cancellation is closely connected with the rethinking of the historical role of Russian culture, which allows us to use the term “cancellation of culture” to analyse the mechanisms of constructing the national identity of the former Soviet countries, in particular Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Of course, having been initiated “from above,” these processes found support in nationalistic-minded groups of citizens, gradually spreading to broader layers of the population. This has led to the people of these countries starting to distance themselves from any manifestations of Russian culture in their everyday lives. As

³ Fyodorova E. 2021. Is “Cancel Culture” Possible in Russia? *Agency for Social Information*. 15.11.2021. URL: <https://www.asi.org.ru/news/2021/10/15/kultura-otmeny/> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

Russian President Vladimir Putin has noted, today we are talking about “progressive discrimination against everything connected with Russia with the complete condonation, and sometimes even encouragement, of the ruling elites.”⁴ Similar processes are also taking place in the Caspian cultural space, most notably in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

As we have already noted, in sociopolitical practice, one can cancel, or try to cancel just about anything – from an undesirable person to a significant event. One of the ways in which “cancellation” is used today is to rewrite history to achieve political goals. At the same time, cancellation extends to both undesirable political (cultural) figures, and to the achievements of entire ethnic groups or even countries. In any case, cancel culture is one of the methods of “manipulative influence of one social group on another in order to protect its interests.”⁵ Cancellation can happen for everyone to see, or it can happen secretly, without any apparent rhyme or reason. All you have to do is say that the person or culture poses a threat to the national unity of the country.

Cancel culture involves, as its most basic element, the absence, or, more accurately, the “cessation of support.” And any hint of reluctance to change one’s views can lead to punishment. In this way, cancel culture fulfils the mission of splitting society into “us” and “them.” This allows people/societies to “choose” the “right” values and priorities. Any cancellation is a public action, a large-scale campaign in which the unification of different and dissimilar people can occur most successfully through the mechanism of identification, that is, through “finding common ground (Burke 1969: 18). To “cancel” something is “to feign protection from it.”⁶ Hiding behind the supposed need to protect certain groups of the population (ethnic groups, minorities), political leaders “assume the right to ‘speak for them,’ thus taking the megaphone away from them and speaking for them.”⁷ Thus, the polyphony of dialogue disappears in the “cancel culture” space, and only an authoritarian dialogue remains.

Cancel Culture as a Mechanism of Control: History and Features

Historically, communities have got rid of “undesirable” elements in various ways: expulsion from the tribe, city, or country; singling out of people as a separate group (pariahs) consigned to oblivion; removal of the names of heroes or images of undesirable pharaohs and their right-hand men; excommunication from the church, etc. Other tactics used included revising historical memory, rewriting history to suit the preferred narrative of the elites in the current situation, and so on. Over time, the methods of

⁴ Balabalova M. 2022. Vladimir Putin: The Notorious “Cancel Culture” Has Become “Cancellation of Culture.” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. 28.03.2022. URL: <https://rg.ru/2022/03/28/vladimir-putin-preslovutaia-kultura-otmeny-prevratilas-v-otmenu-kultury.html> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁵ Sazonova E. 2021. What is “Cancel Culture.” 02.04.2021. URL: <https://inside-pr.ru/archives/8841> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁶ Malakhov V. 2022. Cancel Culture: Awkward Questions and Detailed Answers. *BURO 24/7*. 03.08.2022. URL: <https://www.buro247.ru/community/society/humanity-3-aug-2022-cancel-culture.html> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁷ Ibid.

punishment became more humane. For example, a person would no longer be banished, but literally “marked” in one way or another (with a sign, an item of clothing, or a certain artifact). But the result was the same: everyone avoided the “marked” person, cutting off contacts with and ridiculing them.

In modern society, cancellation acts as an “institution of social condemnation,” which serves not only to condemn, but also to protect those groups of individuals whose rights are infringed upon in an equal society. We are talking, first and foremost, about women, sexual minorities, and people with physical or mental disabilities. Some researchers believe that it is these movements that gave rise to the phenomenon of cancel culture (Lisitsa, Turkulets 2022: 108), often turning it into a mouthpiece for positive discrimination.

From this perspective, it can be assumed that cancel culture is a modern version of the tried-and-true mechanism of social control. Only today it is carried out through the media sphere, giving “cancellation” something of a “concentrated, almost totalitarian character, generating the anxious pulse of the ‘era of moral unrest’” (Chugrov 2022: 96). At the heart of the phenomenon of “cancellation” is the eternal fear of the Other – cancellation is the attempt to protect oneself from it. At the same time, the Other, their picture of the world, their values and meanings, their entire symbolic capital are simplified and primitivized. “Cancellation” presents the Other as a Stranger, the thing that gets in the way and thus has to be banished or destroyed. Cancel culture is thus one way to “turn one’s power (or sense of power) into a socially acceptable form of aggression” (Lisitsa, Turkulets 2022: 108).

In a society where cancellation is a thing, the fear of being cancelled always exists, and this affects both the individual and social groups. It is the fear of being “out of the group,” of being isolated. Social psychologists note that the reason cancel culture is so successful is because it is based precisely on fear. At the same time, cancel culture is quickly turning into an instrument of control, and “network democracy leads to the dogmatization of ideas and the empowerment of the ochlocracy” (Chugrov 2022: 90).

It is worth noting that the issue of transforming cancel culture from an instrument for regulating public life to a political weapon is being studied in great depth by American scholars who have extensive experience analysing this phenomenon. The characteristic features of cancel culture, according to these experts, are: its “cult of safety”; the taboo on any opinion that can be construed as being racist, sexist, or transphobic (Lukianoff, Haidt 2018: 30); the growing hostility between opposing ideological camps and the division of American society (Hampton 2010: 1118), and the desire to control the freedom of opinion through the power of social media (Nakamura 2015: 108).

Some researchers and politicians consider cancel culture to be an effective tool for “censoring and ‘moderating’ the political and social landscape.”⁸ According to them, the cancellation process had proven incredibly effective in combating sexism, racism,

⁸ Parenkov D. 2022. Cancel and Rule? Cancel Culture in Global Politics. *Valdai Discussion Club*. 07.06.2022. URL: <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/otmenyay-i-vlastvuy/> (accessed: 04.02.2025)

and any other form of abuse or harm to others (Nakamura 2015: 107). The American political scientist Pippa Norris points to this, arguing that cancel culture leads to certain values starting to displace completely any others that are not in the focus of the current paradigm (Norris 2023: 154). However, some experts believe that cancel culture does more harm than good, because people who have been cancelled are not allowed to forget their harmful actions. “With a mindset like that, it leaves no opportunity for people to learn, understand and grow from their mistakes.”⁹ This is a real “cultural boycott” (Nakamura 2015: 109). To say “cancel culture,” then, is already to express a point of view, implicitly negative.¹⁰ At the core of “cancellation” is guilt over the violation of accepted standards, be it “religion, ideology, a legal code or just the rudimentary ethics without which no group can survive.”¹¹ But cancelling a culture does not work, because “[a]t some point, we need to think about ways we can create positive change instead of fuelling negative causes.”¹²

Today, the idea of cancel culture has entered the political mainstream. First, it draws attention to existing values that no longer correspond to the interests of the new political elite. In this case, cancel culture begins to be used as a “political weapon” by the political elites themselves, which is precisely what is happening in the former Soviet republics. In some countries (the Baltic states, Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia), they have started “cancelling” everything that is “Russian”; in others (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia), they have cancelled Soviet values only. In the first case, “cancel culture” has become the “cancellation of culture.”¹³ In the second, cancel culture is used as a tool for constructing a new identity based on national values. The intermediate option would be a synthesis of the first two.

The Features of Identity Formation of the Caspian Countries: The Growth of the Ethnicization of National Self-Awareness in the Historical Assessments of the Colonial Period

The Caspian region is where East meets West, where advanced models of European culture coexist in close interaction with traditional economic methods. This fact dictates the need to form a “single metal substrate, close to all the representatives of the Caspian countries” (Khlyshcheva 2021: 80), without which it is impossible to achieve cultural security for all these countries. Understanding the logic and mechanisms of constructing national identity in modern countries is a critical scientific and practical

⁹ Moffett C. 2020. Is cancel culture working? *The Hawk Newspaper*. 16.09.2020. URL: <https://www.sjuhawknnews.com/is-cancel-culture-working/> (accessed: 04.02.2025)

¹⁰ Mishan L. 2020. The Long and Tortured History of Cancel Culture. *The New York Times Style Magazine*. 03.12.2020. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/t-magazine/cancel-culture-history.html> (accessed: 04.02.2025)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Dudenhofer N. 2020. Is Cancel Culture Effective? *Pegasus. The Magazine of the University of Central Florida*. URL: <https://www.ucf.edu/pegasus/is-cancel-culture-effective/> (accessed: 04.02.2025)

¹³ Balabalova M. 2022. Vladimir Putin: The Notorious “Cancel Culture” Has Become “Cancellation of Culture.”

task at the intersection of the social and humanitarian sciences. An historical-typological approach to the analysis of sociocultural processes is used to examine the processes associated with the formation of national identities in the post-Soviet space. If we see the use of such a tool as “cancel culture” in this regard, we can clarify the main vectors of identity construction in the region’s countries in modern conditions. A comparative analysis of “cancellation” processes of Soviet – and partly Russian – culture in countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan will allow us to trace the sociocultural transformations of societies and the values that are directly relation to the construction of identities.

At present, the former Soviet countries in the Caspian region are implementing policies aimed at strengthening the ethnocultural component of national and cultural self-awareness, and it is in this context that the question of choosing a development path and forming a national idea and national identity is raised (Khlyshcheva 2022). This process can be most clearly observed in the example of changes to the curricula (history, languages study, local history) in mainstream schools and higher education institutions in the region’s countries.

The political elites of the former Soviet republics are implementing a project to form a civil nation in a national state, where the main subject of sovereignty is “a part of the population that is distinguished based on the features of cultural and historical origin and called ‘titular’” (Nurgalieva 2009: 79). This state policy is primarily addressed to representatives of the native population of the republics.

The search for a new national identity is closely linked to the affirmation of the symbolic status of the given people in world history, which is why the policy of cultural memory (or “forgetting” important events) is so important. The appeal to history allows countries to bring past, present, and future into correlation, and thus construct the desired national identity. This is why “memory politics” and “cancel culture” are becoming a priority area of education, “an effective tool for the formation of national identity (Aleekseeva, Troitskaya 2022: 55).

The duality of the policy of national memory is evident in the former Soviet countries of the Caspian region, where, after the collapse of the USSR, “the place of Russian culture as the basis of state cultural identity was supplanted by the culture of the titular ethnic group” (Ryzhichkin 2020: 175). This is why it is particularly important to revise history to build the foundations of a collective national identity against the backdrop of breaking away from Russian culture. Rethinking history starts with denying the progressive role of Russia, which today is considered “guilty” of establishing the “colonialist policy of tsarism and the Soviet totalitarian system” (Ryzhichkin 2020: 178). In turn, the systematic rejection of communist ideology led to the revival of traditional values in the societies of the region, where “conservative values and ethnic and sub-ethnic cultural images inherently dominate” (Zvyagelskaya 2009: 47).

In Turkmenistan, for example, the “old” (read: Soviet) books and textbooks, according to officials, “incorrectly present the history of the Turkmen people during the October revolution and the period of Soviet state building.”¹⁴ “Any descriptions of the internal problems of traditional society, as well as positive assessments of Turkmenistan’s becoming a part of the Russian Empire,” are considered “incorrect.”¹⁵

Similar sentiments dominate in Kazakhstan too. For instance, Soviet-era textbooks present the accession of Kazakhstan to the Russian Empire “from the point of view of the interests of certain classes of Kazakh society,”¹⁶ which were counting on Russia for a number of things: “military assistance in the fight against the Dzungars; the possible assimilation of nomad camps in the Ural and Volga region; the opportunities to expand trade relations with Russian markets and craftsmen in Central Asian urban localities.”¹⁷ The Junior jüz’s acceptance of Russian patronage is seen either as a good deal dictated by the selfish goals of the *khan*, or as voluntary submission due to the instability of the *khan*’s power and external threats. The feudal elite is viewed as a supporters of tsarism. Their stance “strengthened the colonial policy of tsarism, aimed at intensifying feudal oppression, which set as its goal the ‘peaceful conquest’ of the steppe.”¹⁸

Soviet textbooks depict membership in the Russian Empire as more desirable than membership of Dzungaria. Modern Kazakh textbooks, meanwhile, describe the pre-revolutionary period of Kazakhstan’s history as exclusively colonial, with the Kazakh people being the object of the colonial policy of Russian tsarism; not a word is said about the positive aspects of this period.

It should be noted that Soviet textbooks also described the policy of tsarism in the outer regions of its territory as colonial, and the peoples who lived in those regions were described as “the oppressed peoples of tsarist Russia, completely illiterate, exploited by both the tsarist government and the Provisional Government.”¹⁹ These books noted that uprisings of oppressed peoples were not uncommon. The pantheon of national heroes was made up of the names of those who fought against tsarism, participated

¹⁴ Tukhbatullin F., Aytakov S. 2013. November 5). How History Textbooks Are Written. 05.11.2013. URL: <http://gundogar.org/?011051415100000000000013000000> (accessed: 06.02.2025)

¹⁵ Ponomarev V. 2001. “The Blacklist”: From the Quran to History Textbooks. Eurasia-Internet Information Analysis Centre Autonomous Non-Commercial Organization. 09.04.2001. URL: https://www.neweurasia.info/archive/2001/free/04_09_Turkmen.htm (accessed: 06.02.2025). (The Eurasia-Internet Information Analysis Centre Autonomous Non-Commercial Organization no longer exists. The Memorial Human Rights Centre is recognized as a foreign agent NGO and is banned in the Russian Federation).

¹⁶ Apollova N. G. 1948. *The Accession of Kazakhstan to the Russian Empire in the 1730s*. Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. P. 192.

¹⁷ Vyatkin M. P. 1941. *Essays on the History of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic*. State Publishing House of Political Literature. P. 123.

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 132. The wording of the original has been preserved here.

¹⁹ Pankratova A. M. (Ed.). 1952. *The History of the USSR: Textbook for Tenth Graders. Part 3*. State Publishing House of Political Literature. P. 187–188.

in the October Revolution, joined the Bolshevik Party, and helped build socialism in their republics (Amankeldi Imanov, Tokash Bokin, U. Saurykov, Mashkhur Kopeyev, Mukhamedzhan Seralin, and Spandiyar Kubeev).²⁰

Pantheon of Local and National Heroes and Ethnic Identity

Today, the history of the emergence of the pantheon of heroes has shifted to high antiquity. For instance, history and areas studies books in Kazakhstan dwell in detail on the Turkic period, since the Saka, Wusun, Kangly, Sarmatians, and Huns are believed to be the ancestors of the Kazakh people. They are all “free and swift as the wind,”²¹ who “could not be conquered.” They also spoke the same language, a testament to their cultural unity. The heroics of the khans, beys, and batyrs who defended their land are immortalized in *dastans*, *kuis*, legends, and *zhys*.²²

It is generally accepted that the most significant period for the formation of Kazakh identity is from the 6th to the 18th centuries, which includes the era of the Turkic states, the Golden Horde, and the Kazakh Khanate itself. Interestingly, textbooks today devote a great many pages to the reign of Abul Khair Khan, who, on the one hand, strengthened the khan’s power and united the jüzes, and, on the other, advocated a Russian protectorate, reasoning that “without strong external support from the Russian state, the khan’s power in the Steppe will not be able to ensure the stable integration of the Kazakhs of all three jüzes and preserve the sociocultural unity and extraterritorial integrity of the Kazakh Khanate.”²³ Abul Khair Khan has gone down in history as the greatest political strategist, military and political figure of the Steppe. His son, Ablai Khan, however, while remaining faithful to the oath of “eternal allegiance to the Russian throne, nevertheless entered into the patronage of the Chinese Bogda Khan,” and subsequently “using his dual status as a subject of the Russian and Qing empires subtly and with diplomatic finesse to successfully pursue his own policy in the Kazakh Khanate.”²⁴

The key throughline in textbooks today is the formation of a single Turkic people: today, the concept of Түрік елі (“Turkic people”) has become a national idea. Kazakhstan is considered the centre of the Turkic world, mostly in the geographic sense, since “all Turkic roads lead to Kazakhstan,”²⁵ and it is through Kazakhstan that “global

²⁰ Omarov I. O., Pankratova A. M. (Eds.). 1949. *History of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic: From Ancient Times to the Present Day*. P. 450–499.

²¹ Abdugulova B. K., Kapaeva A. T., Kenzhebaev G. K. 2012. *Stories of Kazakhstan's History: Textbook for Fifth Graders in 11-Year Comprehensive Schools*. Almaty Book Publishing House. P. 37.

²² Ibid. P. 39.

²³ Masanov J. B., Abylkhozhina I. V. (Eds.). 2000. *History of Kazakhstan: Peoples and Cultures*. Daik Press. P. 151–152.

²⁴ Ibid. P. 157.

²⁵ Tuleshov V. 2013. The Philosophy of Kazakhstan's Geopolitics in the 21st Century. The Turkic Project: Part 1. The Geographical Aspect. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 26.08.2013. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2013/08/26/rupub-52748> (accessed: 05.02.2025). (The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is recognized as a foreign agent NGO and is banned in the Russian Federation).

tendencies of the meeting of the east, west, north, and south of the Turkic *oecumene* are formed.”²⁶ On this basis, Kazakhstan “will pursue, first of all, its national goals and insert its own meanings into the integration processes taking place in this space and its own meanings only, which, in turn, will correlate in a profound and far-reaching way with the emerging pan-Turkic meanings (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and common civilizational identity).”²⁷ The importance of studying this historical stage in the formation of national identity led the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan to put forward a proposal to “split the curriculum material into two classes to ensure that the material is studied properly and in full.”²⁸ Let us trace the main milestones in this historical narrative.

According to Kazakh scholars, the word *kazak* (“Kazakh”) is Turkic in origin and means “free man,” which is one of the components of the national identity of the Kazakh people. In the middle of the 15th century, “a new ethnic group appeared on the historical map – the Kazakhs – the people of the country of the Great Steppe with a clearly expressed ethnic self-awareness and a name for themselves to match it.”²⁹

Similarly, modern textbooks on the history of Turkmenistan emphasize that “the heroic history of our fathers and grandfathers gives the current generation every right to be proud of the glorious deeds of their ancestors, to follow the example they set, and the glorious history of the Turkmen people is recognized throughout the world today.”³⁰ The construction of the history of Turkmenistan starts with the mystical ancestor of the people, Oghuz Khan, and the long history of the Turkmen people is traced back to the legendary warrior Tughril I, who conquered “a number of territories in Central Asia and the Middle East” in the 11th century (Plotnikov 2016: 159). Turkmenistan being part of the Seljuk Empire (11th century) is regarded as a proof of the country’s greatness and longevity. The greatest tragedy of the Turkmen people is the defeat to the Russians in the Battle of Geok Tepe in 1881, which, as we might recall, completed the Russian conquest of Central Asia and saw the annexation of Transcaspia by the victorious side.

²⁶ Tuleshov V. 2013. The Philosophy of Kazakhstan’s Geopolitics in the 21st Century. The Turkic Project: Part 3. The Decline of Eurasianism. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 16.09.2013. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2013/09/04/ru-pub-52848> (accessed: 05.02.2025). (The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is recognized as a foreign agent NGO and is banned in the Russian Federation).

²⁷ Tuleshov V. 2013. The Philosophy of Kazakhstan’s Geopolitics in the 21st Century. The Turkic Project: Part 2. The Logic of Returning to One’s Native Land. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 04.09.2013. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2013/09/04/ru-pub-52848> (accessed: 05.02.2025). (The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is recognized as a foreign agent NGO and is banned in the Russian Federation).

²⁸ Mukhamediyarova Z. 2022. Textbooks on the History of Kazakhstan and World History to be Same for All Schools. *Kazinform International News Agency*. 15.04.2022. URL: https://www.inform.kz/ru/uchebniki-po-istorii-kazahstana-i-vsemirnoy-istorii-budut-edinyimi-dlya-vseh-shkol_a3923179 (accessed 04.03.2023)

²⁹ Bakina N. S., Zhanakova N. T., Suleymonova K. K. 2018. *The History of Kazakhstan: Textbook for Sixth Graders at Mainstream Schools*. Atamura. P. 134.

³⁰ Nuryev A., Moshev M. 2010. *The History of Turkmenistan (17th–20th Centuries): Trial Textbook for the 9th Grade for Instruction in the Russian Language at Secondary Schools in Turkmenistan*. P. 7.

As we can see, the greatness of ancestors is the most important theme in the history of the Central Asian republics, and it is designed to paint the people of these countries today as “worthy successors of the work of their fathers, who were able to achieve their cherished dream – independence (Arslanov, Moseykina 2022: 215). This approach is an example of the “nationalization of history, which manifests itself, on the one hand, in the examination exclusively of the history of one’s own people, whose roots go back to ancient times, and, on the other hand, in the idealization and heroization of its past (Arslanov, Moseykina 2022: 219). And, as we can see, the republics we are studying are no different in this respect.

Let us note that in both Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, history is presented in educational materials based on a standard that is used throughout the region and involves the division into three stages: antiquity; the Middle Ages; and colonial (when annexation to the Russian Empire took place). The colonial period is generally presented in a negative light. The attitude towards the Soviet era, however, is somewhat ambiguous, noting, on the one hand, the control and exploitation on the part of the Soviet state, while also applauding the “creation of the first common state” (Arslanov, Moseykina 2022: 213).

The Subject of Freedom

The main goal of the pre-imperial and colonial periods, according to school textbooks in the Central Asian republics, is the struggle for freedom and the creation of their own national statehood. The most important thing is to convey to children that the people, “having inherited from their ancestors the desire for freedom and independence, rallied around leaders who were called upon by history and tradition itself to not only unite the people within a single sovereign state, but to also care for the lives of ordinary people.”³¹ Russia, with its colonial policy and rule, is depicted as an inhibiting factor that prevented the progressive development and unification of the Turkmen (Kazakh, Kyrgyz) people into an independent state.

The theme of freedom and the constant struggle to achieve it is a through-line in all history textbooks, introducing the idea of the independence of republics and unity around leaders who united the people into a single state. This is the main deed of all the heroic Turkic ancestors. Thus, cancel culture initially manifested itself in the denial of Russia’s progressive role in the tsarist period and the minimization of the part it played in the development of the republics in the Soviet era. The textbooks provide an oversimplified and unambiguously negative portrayal of the events of the February and October revolutions, the Civil War, collectivization, and industrialization (Turkmen textbooks say practical nothing about this). Conversely, the popular uprisings against

³¹ Karazhan K. S. (Ed.). 2011. *The History of Kazakhstan: Lecture Course*. Kazakh University. P. 191.

Soviet power in the late 1920s to the 1940s are described in detail – 372 in Kazakhstan alone, involving more than 80,000 people.³² Civil unrest and rioting continued in the 1950s–1980s. Every single one of them was brutally suppressed.

The textbooks do not analyse the national policy of the Soviet government, which played a significant role in the development of national culture and the creation of schools and educational establishments. However, they point to the fact that “representatives of the Kazakh creative intelligentsia were forced to describe in their works socialist realism, the proletarian revolution, its leader, Vladimir Lenin, and the social changes implemented by the Bolsheviks.”³³ Yet they, as a rule, “could not come to terms with the injustice, and many fell victim to the totalitarian system of were subjected to cruel persecution.”³⁴

Some of the questions and tasks at the end of sections are aimed at further highlighting the negative role of Russia and Russian culture in the development of the Central Asian republics. Some examples: “Why did the Soviet government suppress popular uprisings rather than resolve them peacefully?”; “Write an essay on the topic ‘The Famine in Kazakhstan: The Real Truth’”; “What are the names of the protests, movements, and uprisings against the policies of the Communist and Soviet power in Kazakhstan that took place in the 1950s–1980s?”; “What are the differences between these dates on the Kazakhstan calendar – the Day of Gaining Sovereignty and Independence Day?”; and so on.³⁵ Textbooks for primary schoolers have a section called “Kazakhstan is a Country Involved in Space Exploration,” where one whole sentence is dedicated to Yuri Gagarin’s flight into space, while several pages are given over to the construction of the Baikonur Cosmodrome and Kazakh cosmonauts.³⁶

Between 2007 and 2010, the history of Turkmenistan, including the Soviet history of the country, was taught in schools according to the methodological instructions of the state education authorities – that is, using notes, not textbooks. Modern textbooks also provide precious little information about the Soviet period. For instance, the “History of Turkmenistan” teaches children about the colonization of Turkmenistan by Russia, “about the founding of the fortress and city of Krasnovodsk, the capture of the Geok Tepe fortress by tsarist troops under the command of Mikhail Skobelev in 1881.”³⁷ This is where the textbook effectively ends, and the history of the country from this point on is taught by teachers based on their own knowledge.

³² Turylygul T. T., Zholdasbayev C. J., Kozhakeyeva L. T., Zhusanbayeva G. M. 2015. *The History of Kazakhstan (the Most Significant Periods and Scholarly Problems): Textbook for 11th-Graders in Mainstream Schools*. Mektep. P. 176–177.

³³ Ibid. P. 177.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. P. 136, P. 142, P. 149, P. 153, P. 246, P. 258.

³⁶ Abdugulova B. K., Kapaeva A. T., Kenzhebaev G. K. 2012. *Stories of Kazakhstan's History: Textbook for Fifth Graders in 11-Year Comprehensive Schools*. P. 179–181.

³⁷ Ponomarev V. 2001. “The Blacklist”: From the Quran to History Textbooks. (The Eurasia-Internet Information Analysis Centre Autonomous Non-Commercial Organization no longer exists. The Memorial Human Rights Centre is recognized as a foreign agent NGO and is banned in the Russian Federation).

During the same period, the New Concept of the Great Historical Past was Developed in Turkmenistan. The President of Turkmenistan Saparmurat Niyazov personally compiled a set of moral and ethical standards that he termed *Ruhnama* (“Spiritual Light”), that served as the basis for the country’s education system for years. The *Ruhnama* would become the main source for constructing the new national identity of the Turkmen. According to the *Ruhnama*, modern Turkmen, as the “chosen people,” should be guided by the glorious past of their ancestors – men and women who made history and contributed to the development of world science (especially with the invention of the Turkmen wheel and cart). But the main task is to become a “tight-knit, healthy, beautiful people that strives for moral purity (on the basis of traditions), and for diverse knowledge. After all, it was the Turkmen who, during the rule of the Seljuk sultans, “pulled the caravan of science throughout the Islamic world” (Plotnikov 2016: 159). However, since the genes of the Turkmen contain “the deepest decency and moral purity” (Plotnikov 2016: 160), openness and trust in relation to the outside world, they were unable to adapt to the new realities of life and “succumbed to persuasion from the outside... and therefore lost heart” (Plotnikov 2016: 160). The Soviet era completed the destruction of the Turkmen nation and saw an autocratic state supplant the national state. All this serves as justification for the need to reject the external influence of Russian culture and build a national identity. Study of the *Ruhnama* was introduced as a separate subject, which took time away from the natural sciences and humanities. And other subjects were added too: “The History of a Neutral Turkmenistan,” “The Policy of Independence of the Great Saparmurat Niyazov Türkmenbaşy.”³⁸ The education system was effectively turning into an “instrument of political propaganda.”³⁹ Study of the *Ruhnama* was compulsory not only in schools, but also in enterprises. Special “*Ruhnama* Rooms” were created for the purpose, where professional readers and interpreters of the book would appear. They study of the *Ruhnama* came with its own obligatory exam – failure meant career stagnation, and good luck getting a driver’s license!

After the death of Saparmurat Niyazov in 2007, the new president of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, set about pulling the study of the *Ruhnama* from the school curriculum, instead glorifying the country’s existing top officials and cultural figures (primarily the poet Magtymguly Pyragy).

The goal of studying history, as stressed in the educational literature in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, is effectively to form a national identity that is associated with national self-awareness. The people must value the achievements of their countries,

³⁸ Annakulyev B. R. 2020. Historical Education in Turkmenistan under Türkmenbaşy. *Sunlight International Teaching Portal*. 28.01.2020. URL: <https://solncesvet.ru/opublikovannyye-materialyi/istoricheskoe-obrazovanie-v-turkmenistan8153414/> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

³⁹ The Education System in Turkmenistan: A Spiral of Degradation. Eurasianet. 07.05.2004. URL: <https://russian.eurasianet.org/node/57818> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

its leaders – those entrusted with continuing the deeds of their heroic ancestors, striving to restore the former pre-colonial greatness and spirituality. Thus, “knowledge of genealogy is knowledge of history.”⁴⁰ The basic component of education is to study traditions and folklore, and the most important thing is to understand the role that they play in modern life.

The biggest requirements in terms of educational standards are: an awareness of belonging to national traditions and to the historical continuity of generations; an understanding of the significance of national arts heritage in world culture; an appreciation of the nationally determined differences in, and similarities between the works of Russian, Kazakh, and global literature; the concept of the moral ideal of the Kazakh, Turkmen, and other peoples in works of art and folklore.⁴¹ The ethnic component dominates the education system, requiring pupils to identify themselves as a certain ethnic group.⁴² This simplified model of historical knowledge demonstrates the complex and ambiguous nature of the process of “cancelling” the values of the colonial period. Cancel culture is manifested in the weakening of Russia’s position in the education process in the Caspian countries. “Incorrect” textbooks from the Soviet period are being removed from libraries everywhere, and history is being rewritten. The argument is that the membership of these countries in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union led to the regression of the nation. The most important task, therefore, is to abandon the Soviet past and start the process of forming a positive national identity based on their own glorious past. As a result, the Soviet period is presented in textbooks as colonial, and Russia is more like “a foreign neighbour than a country with which they associate their past.”⁴³

The Position of Russian Language

The next stage in the cancel culture mechanism was the refusal to teach Russian, primarily in schools. In recent years, the Caspian states have pursued a policy to oust the Russian language from political and social life. And none have done so more radically than Turkmenistan, where a process of cultural and educational distancing from Russia had become evident starting in 2001. The country transitioned to the Turkish

⁴⁰ *The History of Kazakhstan (the Most Significant Periods and Scholarly Problems)*. P. 336.

⁴¹ Order No. 604 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Approval of State Compulsory Educational Standards for All Levels of Education” dated October 31, 2018. Registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan on November 1, 2018, under No. 17669. Repealed by Order No. 348 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated August 3, 2022.

Legal Information System of Regulatory Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan. URL: <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/V1800017669#z413> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁴² The State Compulsory Standard of Primary Education: Addendum to Resolution No. 327 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated April 25, 2015. Legal Information System of Regulatory Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan. URL: <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1500000327> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁴³ Shustov A. 2009. On the State of Russian Education in the Central Asian Republics. *Stoletie*. 11.12.2009. URL: https://www.stoletie.ru/geopolitika/russkije_shkoly_vytesnajutsa_tureckimi_2009-12-11.htm/ (accessed: 05.02.2025)

nine-year system of compulsory education. There are a few Turkish schools in Kazakhstan, and the only Central Asian country with no Turkish educational institutions whatsoever is Uzbekistan. The systematic elimination of Russian-language education in Turkmenistan means that Russian will not be taught at all in Turkmen schools by 2030.⁴⁴

Kazakhstan is also quite openly engaging in the de-Russification of the education system. In 2021, the Parliament of Kazakhstan approved the “mandatory use of the Kazakh language exclusively on signs designating privately owned property and place names” once and for all.⁴⁵ The process of the mass de-Russification of surnames began in the early 2010s, with the backing of the Ministry of Culture. Along with this, the process of transitioning from the Cyrillic to the Latin script is underway. Planned for 2023–2031, the transition will be comprehensive, affecting all areas, from education to foreign policy, with the purpose of “integrating with the most advanced countries”⁴⁶ (meaning the United States and European countries). On the other hand, as Kazakh experts explain, the Latinization of Kazakhstan should strengthen national identity, since “the use of Cyrillic is associated with the historical memory of ‘colonialization’” (Yu 2020: 254). The Latin alphabet is intended to weaken Russian influence and thereby strengthen the national identity of the Kazakh people.

A particular problem arises here with cultural heritage, especially when it comes to books printed in Cyrillic. The belief in Kazakhstan is that “literature that was written in the Cyrillic script will no longer be in demand, including for political reasons.”⁴⁷ And while at the state level, members of parliament dismiss the “myth about the infringement of the Russian language in Kazakhstan,”⁴⁸ there are specific sanctions against the use of Russian in everyday communication (“language patrols”). These patrols are tasked with checking that Kazakh language is being used in government agencies and stores, that labels are translated into Kazakh, that employees understand what is written, etc. In some situations, activists from volunteer patrol groups have forced Russian-speaking citizens to apologize on camera for something they have said and for using the Russian language. Let us stress here that President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has criticized this phenomenon for stoking tension.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Panfilova V. 2020. Turkmenistan Gets Rid of Russian Language. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. 17.09.2020. URL: https://www.ng.ru/cis/2020-09-17/1_7967_turkmenistan.html (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁴⁵ Kulagin V. 2021. What's Happening with the Russian Language in Kazakhstan. *Gazeta.ru*. 11.12.2021. URL: https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2021/12/10_a_14303011.shtml (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁴⁶ Panfilova V. 2017. April 13). Kazakhstan's Transition to the Latin Script – A Signal to Russia. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. 13.04.2017. URL: https://www.ng.ru/cis/2017-04-13/1_6973_kazakhstan.html (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Kazakhstan's Education Ministry Denies Abolishment of Russian Language in Schools. *Vedomosti*. 15.08.2022. URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/society/news/2022/08/15/936029-minprosvescheniya-kazahstana-oproverglo-otmenu> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁴⁹ Chernysheva E., Filipenok A. 2022. Tokayev Calles Actions of Language Patrols a “Provocation by the Special Services.” *RBC*. 29.04.2022. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/29/04/2022/626ba8119a7947dd5ddaef90> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

The process of the Latinization of the alphabet in Turkmenistan is almost complete. Here, “an entire generation has grown up that does not speak Russian.” This makes it all the more difficult for students who come to Russia for study to adapt to and become a part of the educational process. And the further complicated by the fact that they know practically nothing about Russian culture. The internet in Turkmenistan is poorly developed, and access to external resources is limited. According to surveys carried out regularly by Astrakhan State University, Turkmen students are not positively disposed to Russia before they go there, but this opinion changes during their stay in the country. And while most Turkmen students want to go home during their first year of studies, this is not the case by the time they are in their final year.⁵⁰ Many of them, the girls in particular, cited the traditions of their homeland – limiting their freedoms – as the main reason for wanting to stay in Russia,

Turkmenistan is one of the most conservative and closed countries in the Caspian region today, where the “‘Russification policy’ is the most comprehensive, and the status of the Russian language is the lowest” (Yu 2020: 255). Even so, here too, we see a dual policy towards Russia and its cultural heritage. It is not uncommon to hear people talking in Russian on the streets of Ashgabat. There is a single Russian-Turkmen secondary school in the country, named after the Russian writer Alexander Pushkin, which is an elite educational institution with instruction in Russian. During Russian-Turkmen talks on June 10, 2022, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin thanked the Turkmen authorities “for their caring attitude towards the Russian language and Russian culture and promised to assist the activities of this school.”⁵¹

The status of the Russian language in Kazakhstan, meanwhile, “while not on a par with Soviet times” (Borishpolets 2014: 66), has retained its significance in everyday life. It is not in the interests of most people living in Kazakhstan to reject the Russian language and Russian culture outright. The education system has adopted the concept of the “Trinity of Languages,” referring to “the study of Kazakh as the state language, Russian as the language of interethnic communication, and English as the language of successful integration into the global community” (Bejsenbaeva 2017: 41).

Even so, the Russian language is increasingly taking a marginal position in both countries. While Kazakhstan officially recognizes the trilingual model, Turkmenistan does not afford the Russian language “either legal status or a wide area of use; the number of Russian nationals living in the country is extremely small; and the Russian language performs a weak function and is turning into a real foreign language” (Yu 2020: 269). As we can see, the rejection of the Russian language is at the same time a

⁵⁰ A 2017 survey revealed that 15 of the 18 Turkmen students in the Department of Cultural Studies planned to return home. When asked the same question in 2022, the majority of these students said they wanted to enrol on master’s courses in Russia. In the end, only three girls returned to Turkmenistan for marriages arranged by their parents.

⁵¹ Putin Praises Caring Attitude to Russian Language in Turkmenistan. RIA Novosti. 10.06.2022. URL: <https://ria.ru/20220610/turkmeniya-1794591562.html> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

rejection of Russian cultural heritage. In this case, cancel culture threatens to turn into the “cancellation of Russian culture,”⁵² and the achievements of peoples during previous historical periods, if not nullified, is at the very least distorted to suit the political situation with shameful half-truths.

Some Conclusions

Integration processes in the modern world are closely linked to the transformation of the identity of various social, territorial and ethnic groups. Global processes are eroding existing models of identity, weakening traditional ties, and disrupting established structures. The fear of becoming lost in the rushing waters of globalization and the desire to preserve one's national identity leads to the “formation of new mythologemes of the traditional picture of the world, creating a simulacra of adaptation mechanisms in a changing society and exerting a powerful influence on the consciousness and behaviour of individuals of a particular community” (Khlyshcheva 2021: 82).

The processes of constructing national identity are based on the practice of changing the collective memory and are the prerogative of the state. Cancel culture is becoming one of the most important elements of the programme to form a new collective memory, “aimed at the deliberate destruction of monuments, religious relics, books, etc., left over from a bygone time” (Savelyeva, Poletaev 2006: 413–414), as are the revival of one's own cultural heritage, and the creation of a new education system in which the younger generation is raised in the spirit of an ethnicized national idea. A similar thing is happening in all post-Soviet republics, indicating various degrees of “cancellation” of the Soviet past and a return to national roots. The extent to which this process is being carried out depends on the position of the political elites in each country.

And while Western countries openly proclaim the cancellation of Russian culture, the states of Central Asia and the Caspian combine “both formal recognition of allied duty and latent Russophobia” (Arslanov, Moseykina 2022: 222). The main waves of cancel culture came when the former Soviet states were achieving their independence, when it was vital for uniting the nation.

The existence of a “carefully thought-out national policy of memory is a prerequisite for the ideological consolidation of society and for attaining a stable position in global politics” (Gaponenko 2020: 51). This is why President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedow talks about the need to “scientifically substantiate the theory of the origin of the Turkmen people, with historical periods laid out clearly and logically, starting from the birth of the nation to the present day.”⁵³ The Concept of Strengthening

⁵² Balabalova M. 2022. Vladimir Putin: The Notorious “Cancel Culture” Has Become “Cancellation of Culture.”

⁵³ Annakulyev B. R. 2020. Historical Education in Turkmenistan under Türkmenbaşy..

and Developing Kazakh Identity and Unity is based on the principles of the “*Мәңгілік ел*” national patriotic idea – civil equity, hard work, honesty, the cult of scholarship and education, a secular country.”⁵⁴ It stresses that “Kazakhstani identity and unity is a continuous generational process,” where every citizen “ties their fate and future to Kazakhstan.”⁵⁵ The goal of the new Concept is to “form a generation of *Мәңгілік ел*, united around the strategic goals of the country’s development, brought up on the principles of Kazakhstani identity and unity, a new kind of Kazakhstani patriotism.”⁵⁶

The cultivation of the young generation begins in childhood, and the school years are especially important. School textbooks are designed to do more than simply teach – they also nurture children. However, by glorifying their past, the authors of textbooks put the backwardness and misfortunes of peoples down to the interference of hostile external forces in their development, thereby forming the image of an “external enemy” (in this case, the enemy is Russia), which inevitably leads to the “cancellation” of the cultural values and heritage of this enemy. This is dictated by both political and economic reasons, related primarily to the expulsion of Russian competitors from the business space.

The main goal of educating and nurturing the country’s children is to “politicize historical memory, which is used for practical purposes” (Vodenko 2021: 84). A “single canon was established” in the educational literature of various republics, “the main feature of which was ethnocentrism, a focus on the history and culture of one’s own people only – people who appear as the main subject of the historical process” (Arslanov, Moseykina 2022: 220). However, a “common past is impossible without specific efforts to construct one” (Malakhov 2001: 127). Cancel culture thus becomes a tool for constructing the necessary national identity, one that corresponds to the interests of the national ruling elites. But a national idea cannot be mechanically introduced into society by ideological pressure, and popular ideas about historical events today are not “the national memory of a nation, passed down from generation to generation, but the professional activity of academics, teachers, and politicians” (Gaponenko 2020: 49).

Cancel culture is a dangerous phenomenon, especially in international politics. When used as a “mechanism for managing the socio-political agenda,”⁵⁷ cancel culture acquires a distinct ideological connotation and becomes a tool for manipulating mass consciousness. And if cancel culture can temporarily solve the problems of forming one’s own identity in a single state, then “it can have the opposite impact on other participants in international relations.”⁵⁸ What is more, the trap of cancel culture is that

⁵⁴ On the Draft Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Approval of the Concept of Strengthening and Developing the Identity and Unity of Kazakhstan”: Resolution No. 1012 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 18, 2015. Legal Information System of Regulatory Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Available at: <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1500001012> (accessed: 05.02.2025)

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Parenkov D. 2022. Cancel and Rule? Cancel Culture in Global Politics.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

it erodes the basic values of one's own society, leading to the autonomation of cultural spaces, which does not promote interaction among peoples, but only increases the threat to cultural security. The materials from this study can be used to carry out a critical analysis of cases where cancel culture is used against Russia for the purpose of developing and expanding intercultural relations between the countries of the Caspian region and Russia within the framework of the formation of a new multipolar model of international relations.

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Conflicts of interest.

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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