

**ANNOTATION**  
**of the dissertation on the topic:**  
**«Constructing Ethnic and Cultural Identity in Kazakhstani Cinema: A**  
**Cultural Analysis»**  
**submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**  
**in the specialty “8D03102 – Culturology”**  
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**The purpose of the research** is to identify the primary characteristics of Kazakhstani cinema in the construction of cultural and ethnic identity through films as an effective medium for their representation.

**Objectives of the research:**

1. to substantiate the distinctiveness of cultural identity by researching the theoretical and methodological foundations;
2. to conduct a comparative analysis of scientific and conceptual studies on the issue of ethnic identity;
3. to develop a classification of similarities and differences in identities by reviewing scholarly works of researchers who have studied the problem of national identity;
4. to perform a comparative analysis of the features of ethnic and cultural identity in art to determine the role of art in the formation of identity;
5. to conduct a comparative analysis of how cultural and ethnic identities are constructed in the context of films from developed countries and transitional societies;
6. to analyze the image of film protagonists as a sign of ethnic and cultural identity in a transitional period through the prism of cinematography;
7. to examine Kazakhstani films that have created on-screen images of ethnic and cultural identity at different stages of its development, and substantiate their artistic and ideological advantages of construction within the context of modern Kazakhstani cinema;
8. to consider directorial tools, poetic language, and artistic solutions in constructing ethnic and cultural identity in the context of Kazakhstani cinema;
9. to conduct a cross-cultural analysis to justify the cinematic language used in constructing cultural and ethnic identity in Kazakh, Turkish, South Korean, American, and Kyrgyz films.

**Research Methods:**

**Theoretical:** analysis, comparison, systematization, and generalization of theoretical ideas in scholarly and theoretical literary sources, as well as normative documents on education and culture.

**Comparative:**

- Cultural and art analysis.
- Semiotic and semantic analysis for determining methods of constructing the image of cultural identity in cinema through symbols and signs.

- Interviews with international participants of film festivals held in Kazakhstan who are specialists in the field of cinema.

- Surveys and questionnaires to identify the channels and means by which the images of cultural identity constructed in Kazakh, Turkish, South Korean, American, and Kyrgyz films influence viewers' consciousness.

**Main Provisions Put Forward for Defense (verified scientific hypotheses and other findings that constitute the novelty):**

1. Based on the study and analysis of theoretical, methodological, and conceptual aspects of cultural, ethnic, and national identity in the context of societies emerging from a totalitarian system—such as Kazakhstan—and influenced by a multiethnic composition and external factors, the priority of cultural identity is defined as an effective method.

Cultural identity is broader than ethnic identity; it can encompass civic identity, professional identity, religious identity, and other aspects, which helps prevent political tensions from escalating. Cultural identity, as a sociocultural phenomenon, is more changeable and can be influenced by such external factors as globalization, migration, and technological changes, whereas ethnic identity is often more stable and linked to genetic heritage and cultural traditions.

2. In developed countries and transitional societies, different paths for forming and creating cultural identity have been chosen. Based on the study of official documents, it has been established that some countries prioritize cinema as a means of shaping cultural identity, while others focus on national sports, cultural entertainment, etc. In Kazakhstan, cinematography has been chosen as the priority.

3. The mechanisms for constructing ethnic and cultural identity in the context of Kazakhstani cinematography have been identified and systematized using cinematic elements. Studying these mechanisms allows us to understand the influence of cinematography on the construction of cultural, ethnic, and national identity and to substantiate the importance of consciously perceiving cinema as a means of forming and interpreting one's own identity. Essentially, cinematography can influence the creation of cultural identity by offering examples of how to think and act, creating cultural images, promoting cultural dialogue, and reproducing cultural memory. Thus, cinema serves as a carrier of the value-semantic dimension of culture.

4. Ethnocultural features of the Kazakh image have been studied and identified based on the artistic and visual tools of contemporary Kazakhstani cinema. The language of cinema reveals cultural images that can shape our personal perception. The need for cultural identity in society clearly responds to social threats. In addition to symbols, myths, legends, and historical events, cinema uses other methods to reveal cultural images. Commonly, these include language, costumes, ornaments, mise-en-scène, locations, and music. Cinema, as an open communication system in the cultural space, is defined as a multifaceted cultural phenomenon that conveys cultural identity.

5. A comparative analysis of the methods and concepts for creating and shaping cultural identity in the context of cinematography in various countries was carried out. Based on this, the shortcomings and achievements in shaping cultural identity in Kazakh cinema have been formulated.

6. In studying the formation and development of cultural identity, the image of the main protagonist in a film plays a significant role. The study analyzes the evolution and transformation of on-screen images in Kazakhstani cinema and explores their role in shaping cultural distinctiveness. Defining the main character as a symbolic subject, the research examines the character's ability to accumulate the values of an era, thus becoming a symbol of the time. This has been identified as the quintessence of the public's views, aspirations, fears, as well as crises of national scope.

7. Since the main character on screen is a special form of cultural hero, they are examined as a defining and meaningful manifestation of values. This character represents a set of ideas, ideals, and values that are significant and relevant for a particular period and for individuals in a sociocultural environment. Therefore, through the creation and evolution of images in Kazakh cinema, the stages and content of cultural identity are formulated, and a conceptual foundation is substantiated that corresponds to this period.

8. With the aim of identifying the image of ethnic and cultural uniqueness in Kazakhstani cinema, interviews were conducted with foreign participants of film festivals who are cinema specialists, asking, "Who is a Kazakh to you?" According to the majority of foreigners, the national identity of the Kazakh people falls into three categories: first: A hospitable people ("Alpamys Goes to School" directed by Abdulla Karsakbayev, "Gaukhar Tas" directed by Sharip Beisembaev). Second: Boundless love for their land ("Mustafa Shokay" directed by Satylbaldy Narymbetov, "Kazakh Khanate: Diamond Sword" directed by Rustem Abdrashev, "Tomiris" directed by Akan Satayev). Third: Harmony with nature ("Trizna" directed by Bolat Mansurov, "Atameken" directed by Shaken Aimanov, "Oralman" directed by Sabit Kurmanbekov).

Modern Kazakhstani cinema exhibits three significant processes reflecting different aspects of civic identity and historical memory. The first is civic identity, represented in the work of director Adilkhan Yerzhanov—"Yellow Cat," "A Dark-Dark Man." The second is the theme of famine, through which historical memory and national identity are demonstrated, using images of the Alash Orda movement in the works of director Murat Yeszhan and his film "Wake Up, Kazakh!" Third, it has been shown that in Kazakh cinema, comedies in the format of the KVN style—such as "Business Kazakh-Style in America" by Nurlan Koyanbayev—have influenced the further regression of public perception, which underwent changes in the process of self-discovery.

Thus, films from the classical era of Kazakh cinema also demonstrate cultural and national identity presented in a hidden form. Unfortunately, as of today, of the three processes mentioned above that have formed in contemporary

Kazakhstani cinema, only the second category promotes historical memory and images of the Alash Orda movement. Therefore, based on quantitative indicators, we have concluded that commercial films dominate over films that promote national and cultural identity. In the future, the state should establish special cultural programs to produce films that glorify our spiritual heritage and cultural-national characteristics. This is because culture, including cinema, shapes the perception of our nation among people from other countries.

9. Based on the results of this study, conclusions have been drawn about the characteristics of constructing images of cultural identity in Kazakh, American, Turkish, South Korean, and Kyrgyz films and their impact on the consciousness and behavior of young people in Kazakhstan. A survey conducted during the research showed that influence from different cultures—through cinema and television series—shapes the interests of young people in various ways. The survey revealed that Kazakh youth are drawn to the genre diversity of American cinema, the fairy-tale-like depictions of life and nature in Turkish TV series, and the clothing style of characters in South Korean dramas. Thus, the influence of diverse cultures through cinema and TV series enriches the cultural identity of Kazakhstan's younger generation and increases their capacity to perceive different cultural points of view. Overall, this study shows that Kazakh youth are developing an understanding and perception of culture.

**Justification of novelty and significance of the results obtained and their correspondence to scientific development areas or Government programs:**

For the first time, in order to identify cultural and ethnic identity in Kazakhstani cinema, a model is proposed in which the elements of the film used in constructing identity are defined. This model consists of the following unified approaches:

- **Conceptual and goal-oriented approach** (methods, tasks, and principles in the study of cultural, ethnic, and national identity);

- **Comparative analysis method**, which enables comparing various products of cinematography to identify patterns in the use of content-expert techniques (the language of cinema, “film-narration” and “film-images” — a term by G. Deleuze). In particular, attention is focused on how each of these elements contributes to shaping cultural and ethnic images that are important in the multi-ethnic and complex historical conditions of Kazakhstan.

The results of this research can be widely used in teaching cultural studies, art studies, in teaching art history, and in creating scientific and theoretical as well as historical conclusions necessary for the research work of master's and doctoral students. In addition, the dissertation lays the groundwork for analyzing this process in post-Soviet republics and developing new concepts, theoretically expanding the role of art in general—and cinema in particular—in forming cultural identity, using Kazakhstani cinema as an example. Some results of the dissertation have special practical importance for creating new works in cinematography.

**Structure and scope of the work.** The dissertation consists of three chapters, nine paragraphs, an introduction and conclusion, a list of references, and an appendix.